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Adventure

A POPULAR PUBLICATION

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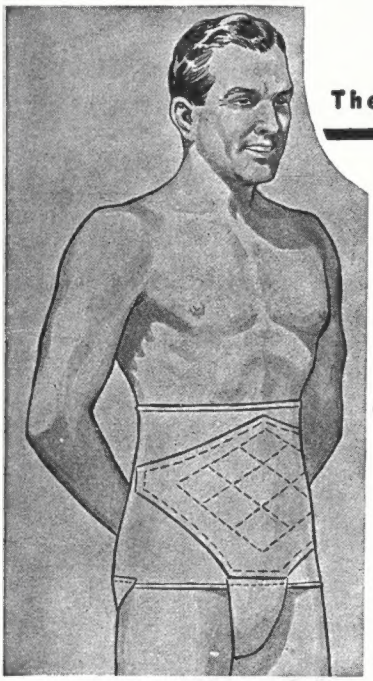
with Commander

The Amazing NEW Abdominal Supporter



Yes, instantly you, too, can begin to feel ALIVE . . . ON TOP OF THE WORLD by joining the Parade of Men who are marching up the highway of happier living with the COMMANDER, the amazing new Men's abdominal supporter.

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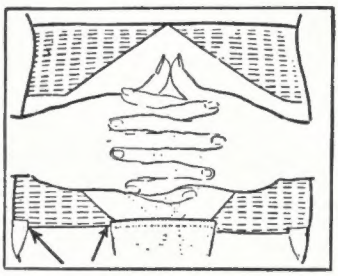

*** THE SECRET OF THE "INTERLOCKING HANDS"**

Only COMMANDER contains this NEW principle. A special non-stretch material is built into the Two-way stretch body of the COMMANDER. STRETCHES 10 to 14 INCHES HIGH . . . in the outline of two interlocking hands for EXTRA DOUBLE SUPPORT where you need it most

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Standish, Mich.

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St. Charles, Ill.

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J. C. McG.
St. Paul, Minn.

★ "I recommend the Commander for what it is made for. It sure has been a great help to me. I want to thank you for what it has done. I might add it has helped me more than anything I have ever tried."

P. N.
Fort Knox, Ky.

Above are just a few of the many unsolicited testimonials for the Commander that we receive regularly. Originals of these and others are on file.

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I repaired some Radio sets when I was on my tenth lesson. I really don't see how you can give so much for such a small amount of money. I made $600 in a year and a half, and I have made an average of $10 a week—just spare time.—JOHN JERRY, 1729 Penn St., Denver, Colorado.

Radio Technician at Ordnance Works

I am now Chief Radio Technician at ..... Ordnance Works and very pleased with my new position. If I had not taken the N. R. I. Course I might be digging ditches or perhaps unemployed. —R. S. LEWIS (Address omitted for military reasons.)

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For several years I have been in business for myself making around $200 a month. Business has steadily increased. I have N. R. I. to thank for my start in this field. —ARLIE J. FROEHNER, 300 W. Texas Avenue, Goose Creek, Texas.

WHY MANY RADIO TECHNICIANS MAKE $30, $40, $50, A WEEK

The Radio repair business is booming as manufacturers have stopped making new sets and the country's 57,400,000 home and auto sets are becoming older, needing more repairs, new tubes, parts. This is opening new opportunities for full time and part time Radio Technicians to get good jobs, or to open their own Radio repair businesses. Radio Technicians and Operators hold good jobs in the country's 882 Broadcasting Stations and in Aviation, Police, Commercial, Marine and Government Radio. Loud Speaker Systems give good jobs to many. The Government is calling for Civilian Radio Technicians and Operators. Government orders for millions of dollars worth of Radio equipment offer opportunities in Radio factories. Men with Radio Training are in line for extra rank and pay in the Army and Navy. Many Radio developments such as Television, held back by the war, will make Radio a live-wire field for the future.

BEGINNERS SOON LEARN TO EARN $5, $10 A WEEK EXTRA IN SPARE TIME

Due to the boom in the Radio repair business, practically every neighborhood offers opportunities for a good part time Radio Technician to make extra money fixing Radio sets. I give you special training to show you how to start cashing in on these opportunities early. You get Radio parts and instructions for conducting experiments and building test equipment to help you do better, faster Radio repair work. My 50-50 method—half working with Radio parts I send you, half studying lesson texts—makes learning Radio at home interesting, fascinating, gives you valuable practical experience.

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National Radio Institute, Dept. 2JS9
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OCTOBER ISSUE ON SALE SEPTEMBER 11TH

Adventure

(Registered U. S. Patent Office)

Vol. 107, No. 5 for September, 1942 Best of New Stories

Gold Standard (a novelette) . . . . . E. HOFFMANN PRICE 10
Eight hundred ounces of gold is a fortune worth packing in peacetime, but with fighting to be done and a pack of yellow dogs baying at your heels through the jungle it's just junk to weight a man down.

Shaking the Rails (verse) . . . . . HELEN von KOLNITZ HYER 29
Shake 'em easy, shake 'em light, shake 'em boy, till you git 'em right!

Comfort to the Enemy . . . . . BRIAN O'BRIEN 32
It's a bad idea for navy men to run around naked these days—even in ports as hot as Zanzibar. If they do, where the hell can you pin a medal?

Nightly to Milwaukee (a novelette) . . . . . HARRY OLIVER 40
The storm warning read, *Advise all shipping remain in port*, and the Coast Guard didn't send it out just for fun. But "nightly service" meant *nightly* exactly as advertised, to the *Minnetonkwa* and her crew, even if taking the ancient craft out was a sure ticket to the Great Lakes graveyard.

Organization Day . . . . . FRANK W. EBEY 58
A hundred and twenty-four years old to the day, and from the Seminole War till now "B" Battery had never lost a gun. Then, out of the blue Pacific skies—

India Passage . . . . . HAL G. EVARTS 65
Ross was no engineer, only an animal hunter for zoos, but with the help of a little ram spoor he managed to buck Captain Tokura's four years at Cal Tech all right and show his partner, Mack, a trick or two.

The Way of a Champion . . . . . HAROLD TITUS 75
Young Brent Cady tried hard to be a no-good drifter but it just didn't work out. No man can stay down when his dog's a champion.

The Sword of Qualoon (2nd part of 3) . . . . . BARRÉ LYNDON 84
While Axis bombers roar above Suez, Cunningham rides alone to challenge the mob of howling fanatics mustered by Ibn Abdallah under the sign of the sword.

One Man's Road (a fact story) . . . . . WILLIAM MORGAN HOBBS 112
Nazi troops swarmed along it last year, only to be driven back at its very terminus. An American built it, almost a hundred years ago, and his forethought and skill gave the Russians their chance to stall the Axis.

The Camp-Fire . . . . . Where readers, writers and adventurers meet 118
Ask Adventure . . . . . Information you can't get elsewhere 6
The Trail Ahead . . . . . News of next month's issue 128
Lost Trails . . . . . Where old paths cross 130

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Kenneth S. White, Editor

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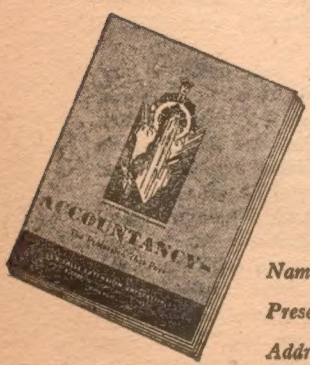

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ASK ADVENTURE

Information you can't get elsewhere

ALAS poor Mkwawa! Nobody knew him well.

Request:—I would like you to tell me, if possible, everything you know about the "Skull of Mkwawa," or perhaps I should say the story behind it. (If any.)

Some time ago, I happened to glance over a copy of the much "kicked around" Treaty of Versailles and noticed, while doing so, a short, obscure paragraph which read something like this: "Germany shall turn over to the Allies the skull of Sultan Mkwawa immediately, etc., etc.," or words to that effect. That aroused my curiosity; there must have been a great deal of importance (and also an interesting tale) attached to that certain skull to rate it a mention in an important treaty like Versailles.

I have had no luck investigating it on my own; I have presumed that Mkwawa was at one time the Sultan of Zanzibar and that his skull was an object of veneration and awe to the natives of German East Africa, which, as you know, was under the nominal control of Zanzibar until the partition of Africa in 1885; also, that the skull must have had such power over the tribes, that the Allies, who had just relieved Germany of its East African possession, did not want it (the skull) to remain in their former enemy's hands, for fear that it would be used by them to foment trouble there later on. Are any of these "presumptions" correct? If so, go into a little more detail, please.

I hope you will be able to give me the desired information. If not, perhaps you can direct me to some other possible source.

If, however, you are able to answer my query, kindly tell me a little something about the old boy himself and what he did to have his skull rate such attention, and (just a couple of more questions and I'll sign off) did Germany relinquish the skull to the Allies, or was she allowed to ignore that clause as she was allowed to ignore almost all the others? And, assuming that this piece of bone in question did (or does) have great power over the tribes of East Africa and that Germany did turn it over to the victors, what was to stop them (the Germans) from faking up another skull and passing it off on the "poor, benighted heathen" as the real McCoy? In other words, since one skull looks practically the same as another, how would you know that this particular skull was "the one, the only, the original" if you saw it?

Thanking you in advance for your trouble (and I'm afraid that last question *will* be rather troublesome) and hoping that, at last, someone will be able to tell me about old Mkwawa and his "konk."

Yours sincerely,

—Robert J. Hyland,
c/o Room 320,
Hotel Pines,
Pine Bluff, Ark.

Reply by Gordon MacCreagh:—Old Sayid Mkwawa, el Muqdishu's skull, eh? A good story; a fantastic yarn that has evolved into all the magnificence of a fairy tale. And the fairy tale angle of it is all that I can give you; the yarns that drift around with the camp fire's smoke. For el Muqdishu, of course, was long before my time.

El Muqdishu, (the Huge One), el Mumbasa, (the Magnificent). Today's Mogadisciu, ex-Italian, and Mombasa, ex-German ports are apparently named after the old reprobate. Or it could be that the reprobate took his titles from the then mud villages that he overran.

Mkwawa the Magnificant was, so the tales run, (1) a bastard brother of Sayyid Burgash, the big shot of Zanzibar in the 1870's, (2) Burgash himself when he prowled in disguise doing a Haroun el Raschid act, (3) the son of Sayyid Said, Burgash's father, and a Karisimbi gorilla who was taken by Stanley and sold to Said as a slave.

Anyhow, Mkwawa was quite a boy. Muqdishu, he was able to take a rifle and bend the barrel across his chest—which is probably no more lie than Du Chaillu's reports of other gorillas bending rifles. While Burgash, back in Zanzibar Island, claimed the ruling power, Mkwawa inland did the ruling—and from no capital residence. He roved the land with his army and descended upon backwoods villages out of the jungles, where he administered the local disputes and took what loot he needed. Likely enough this no-

(Continued on page 8)

The 97 Pound Weakling

—Who became "The World's Most Perfectly Developed Man"

"I'll prove that YOU, too, can be a NEW MAN!"

Charles Atlas

I KNOW, myself, what it means to have the kind of body that people pity! Of course, you wouldn't know it to look at me now, but I was once a skinny weakling who weighed only 97 lbs.! I was ashamed to strip for sports or undress for a swim. I was such a poor specimen of physical development that I was constantly self-conscious and embarrassed. And I felt only HALF-ALIVE.

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When I say I can make you over into a man of giant power and energy, I know what I'm talking about. I've seen my new system, *"Dynamic Tension,"* transform hundreds of weak, puny men into Atlas Champions.

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Do you want big, broad shoulders—a fine, powerful chest—biceps like steel—arms and legs rippling with muscular strength—a stomach ridged with bands of sinewy muscle—and a build you can be proud of? Then just give me the opportunity to prove that *"Dynamic Tension"* is what you need.

No "ifs," "ands," or "maybes." Just tell me where you want handsome, powerful muscles. Are you fat and flabby? Or skinny and gawky? Are you short-winded, pepless? Do you hold back and let others walk off with the prettiest girls, best jobs, etc.? Then write for details about *"Dynamic Tension"* and learn how I can make you a healthy, confident, powerful HE-MAN.

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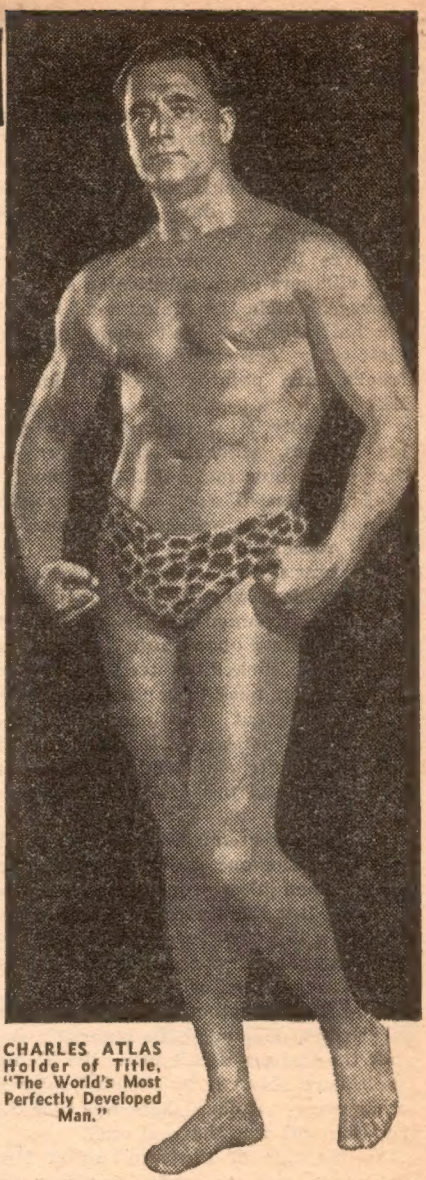

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Name.....

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Address .....

City..... State.....

(Continued from page 6)

madic habit gave rise to the one about his being Burgash in disguise.

Whatever village el Muqdishu came to, he demanded twenty wives for the night and ten for the day—being busy with lawing during some of the day.

Wives being sometimes difficult, the wily villagers often substituted she-chimpanzees, which, the Magnificent One being half Gorilla, didn't seem to notice. Half-wits, deformed persons, zanies, freaks, are pointed out as Sons of Mkwawa.

Eventually Mkwawa was gathered to his fathers, whoever they were—and there exist now more skulls of him than of St. Peter. Three, no less; possibly more in outlying villages, but those ones aren't authentic.

The best skull of Mkwawa *talked*. That was because it was in the possession of a witch doctor named the Wizard of Elgon, (about whom I once wrote a story). Another skull clicked its teeth to say yes and shook its head to say no when it was asked important questions of state—I don't know just how this was done. The third authentic skull did nothing; only its district had prosperity as long as it was there.

The Settler-of-the-Important-Questions skull was the one grabbed by the Germans when they took over—so they thought. But the Kavirondo hunters say, no, it's a lie; they've got it hidden back in a witch house some place. No Kavirondo ever knows which witch house.

So, after Versailles, when the conquering British demanded the authentic skull that the Heinies didn't have, the Heinies made sure about it by handing over another ringer in place of the one that they had thought was the real one.

So the tale of the Skull of el Muqdishu, you see, is a confusing thing from any angle that you take it.

The last I ever heard of it was that the skull that isn't the skull that wasn't the skull is stored in a tin hat box in the official property room of the Government House, Kenya Colony. Me, I never went to look see. The current camp fire stories were better than disillusion.

So there you have the true story of Mkwawa. "Ex Africa semper novum."

Oh, and there's a Banyan trader in Jinja (Lake Victoria) bazaar who will sell you the honest to God real skull, none of those other fakes, for one hundred and fifty rupees or nine pounds sterling. I don't know whether anybody has bought any of them yet.

ALONG the old Contraband Trail.

Request:—I enjoyed the article in April *Adventure* on old cattle trails. Permit me to ask a few further questions on the matter.

(1)—Did the Contraband Trail come through or near what is now Lake Charles, La.?

(2)—You state that the Old Spanish Trail entered Texas near Orange, Texas. It is my understanding that the present highway No. 90 follows the Old Spanish Trail. As you know highway 90 goes through Lake Charles, but I have heard that the Trail did not really go through this place, but turned off some miles before reaching what is now Lake Charles.

(3)—Did the Opelousas Cattle Trail come through what is now Lake Charles? What was the Texas terminus of this trail, and next to the old Contraband Trail, was the Opelousas Trail the oldest cattle trail from Texas? Has there been published a book, giving history of these old trails, especially the Opelousas Trail, with maps?

Somewhere I have read that not only cattle was brought from Texas, but that Bowie of Alamo fame, and others did a thriving business in bootlegging negro slaves from Spanish territory and selling them in Louisiana.

I imagine these old cattle drivers had their favorite songs, and have wondered if these old time songs have been preserved?

Yours very truly,
—Robert E. Kerr,
1227 Boulevard,
Lake Charles, La.

Reply by J. W. Whitaker:—At an early date before Texas won her independence, possibly in the 20's or early 30's, the settlements in Louisiana opened a market for Texas products and early maps show a "Contraband Trail" skirting the coast and connecting the Texas and Louisiana areas, indicating trade despite legal restrictions that prevailed. Horses were driven over this trail, though possibly not cattle, for the Spanish and the Indians were lovers of horses and could get all the fresh meat they wanted from the deer, buffalo, antelope, bear, that roamed the country. More than likely the trail came near if not through Lake Charles for it operated in that section of the country.

The Old Spanish Trail began at St. Augustine, the oldest city in the U. S.,

(Continued on page 122)

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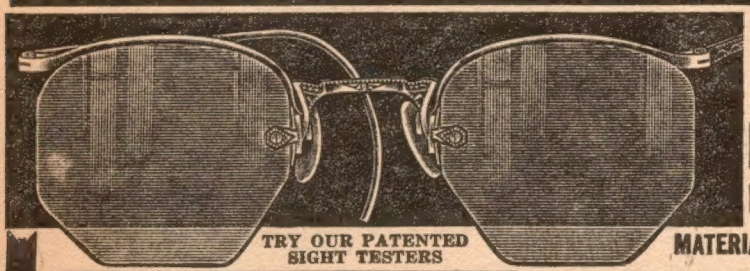

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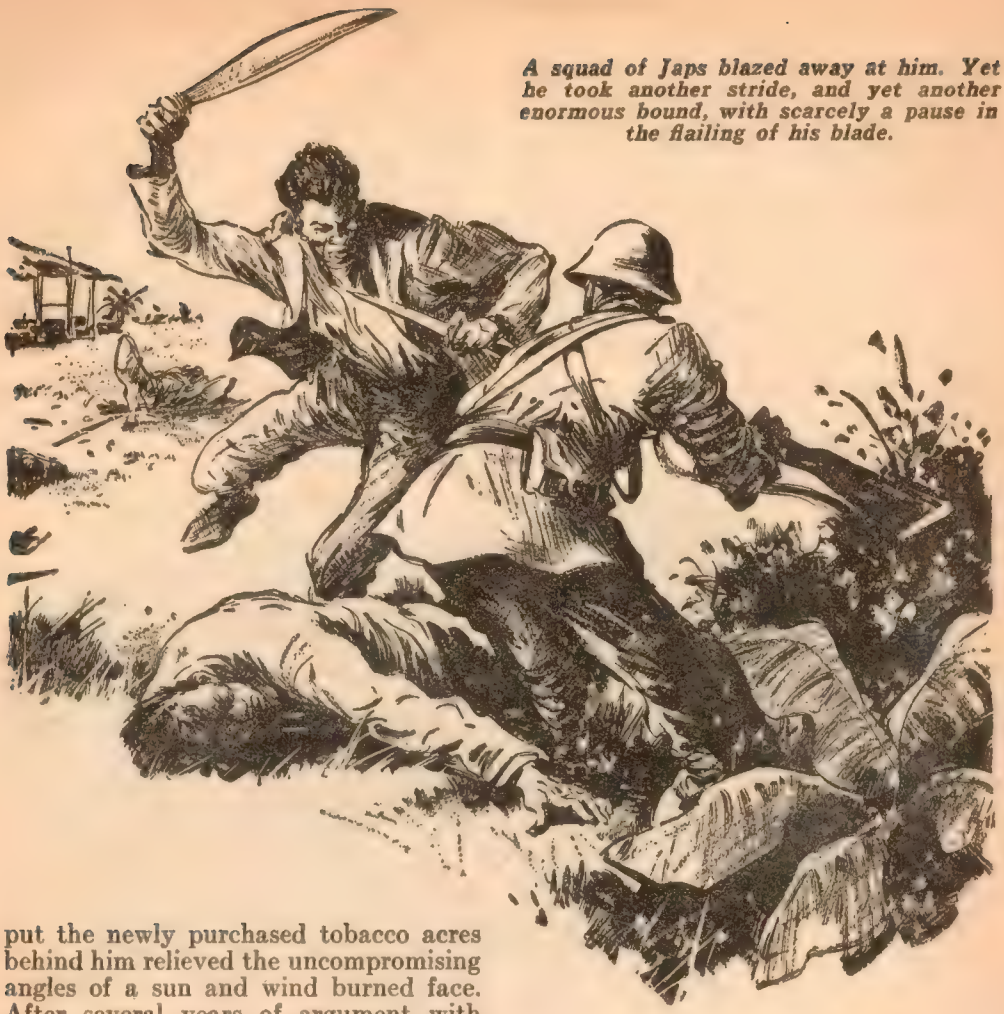
GOLD STANDARD

By E. HOFFMANN PRICE

BAILEY headed north into Balbalasang, and as usual, with only one Philippine pony and not a single *cargadór*. Even the runty island pintos could carry at least as much gold as any one man wanted. And where assayer's receipts for the first find had failed to impress the girl in Kiangan, the real stuff would do the trick; thick flakes, pounds and pounds of them, all the loot he had been forced to leave behind for lack of transportation, and then see what would happen to her talk about taking root in a tobacco plantation!

Bailey was lean and angular. His mouth clamped tight, not from any natural taciturnity, but simply because a prospector in the Mountain Province of Luzon seldom has a chance to chatter. However, the twinkle in his eyes as he



A squad of Japs blazed away at him. Yet he took another stride, and yet another enormous bound, with scarcely a pause in the flailing of his blade.

put the newly purchased tobacco acres behind him relieved the uncompromising angles of a sun and wind burned face. After several years of argument with Alma, he had at last devised a convincing logic.

He went northwest up a narrow trail which wound in and out among stands of gigantic narra and iron hard camagon; the great trunks shot up ninety feet and more, without a branch. Some were draped with orchids, while parasitic ferns found root in the bark of others. And later, he picked his way among the downward-reaching arms of monstrous banyans.

They were hungry for earth. Each branch bent down to take root, and then in its turn branched out. "That'd be me," Bailey told himself. "That's her idea, making me spread out, grab more land!"

Those bayans not only had their feet in the ground, they also had their hands sunk wrist deep into the earth. A farmer moved, more or less, over a hectare of ground, a planter had a slightly wider range, but in the end he was rooted, a human tree which could still plod a little.

"But you'd not be a tao, clubbing a carabao," Alma had argued. "After all, a planter is a businessman."

"I dig into more dirt than any tao," he would retort. "It's not the work I mind. The trouble comes when your brain strikes root, when you begin to see life as so many pockets of rice, so many bales of tobacco."

Then he rose above the steaming flats and lower slopes, and bent into the steep climb, still taking long strides, but at a slower beat; however, he had to prod the shaggy pony which carried his kit.

BAILEY was unarmed. Though the bolo hanging from his belt would split a man's head as readily as it would shear a bamboo stalk, the mountaineers did not consider the heavy blade a weapon. If there were trouble, a rifle or pistol would not greatly affect the outcome, whereas the mere possession of firearms might arouse the sporting instinct of an Igorot, for the mountaineers had no guns.

Finally he was back again at the great wonder of the Mountain Province, the terraced rice fields of the Ifugaos. Step after step, they circled the steep slopes, reaching all the way from Kiangan to Bontoc, and from the valley floor to the rocky crests. There were retaining walls of masonry as high as forty feet, all of stone, unsquared and uncemented; laid by half naked mountaineers, and maintained by them. Step after broad green step, rice grew from artificial swamps, pools fed and drained by cunningly spliced lengths of bamboo pipe. Men in G-strings, and women in short striped skirts tilled these ribbon shaped fields which rose into the low hanging clouds.

Flood and earthquake and erosion: the Ifugaos fought these, and kept up their twelve thousand miles of masonry retaining wall.

"No damn wonder," he said to himself, "they used to hunt heads to break the monotony. So would I."

But he was not sorry for the Ifugaos. Like him, they did what they had to do. Time and again, they had moved down into the fertile flatlands, and each time, epidemics nearly wiped them out, until the survivors had to return to their terraces.

It was all very simple to Bailey. Where one had to make a hanging gar-

He picked his way among the downward-reaching arms of monstrous banyans.

den of each steep mountain, another had to hunt pockets of gold. But thus far, his logic had not shaken Alma.

That night, he spread his blankets on the bamboo floor of an Ifugao hut; and in the morning, he set out for the Bontoc country, and the cold peaks of the Cordilleras, nine thousand feet above the sea.

West of Baliwang, it was as hard to find the trail as to climb it. For the first few days, he heard the distant booming of gongs, and when gray afternoon became dark gray dusk, the glow of cooking fires guided him to small settlements. At last he reached heights where not even the knotty-legged pagans ventured,

a narrow valley which the sun reached only a few hours a day, and then as a murky, mist-veiled blob.

Here was silence broken only by the everlasting drip-drip-drip from the branches of oaks and pines. And here was the pocket he had discovered by an instinct he could not explain.

In those years of hunting, he might have staked rich claims; he could have raised capital, could have profited even from the short end of a deal; but grubbing ore, grinding the stuff, treating it with cyanide, that was as bad as farming. His was the tradition of the pocket hunters of the Sierra Nevada, back in California—the lone prospector, taking either massed gold, or none at all.

Perhaps there was no logic in him, but a man moved in accord with what drove him.

So Bailey gutted the pocket whose top layer, converted into an assayer's receipt, had kicked back. To humor Alma, to pave the way for his final argument, he had driven with her from the Kiangan Hospital to Isabela Province, at the head of the Cagayan Valley whose rich bottom grew the best tobacco in Luzon.

There, after the quickest real estate deal on record, and three days of riding about the plantation with the wiry overseer, he had said, "Pacifico, take charge until I come back. I have business in Balbalasang, and maybe in Abra."

"I understand, *patrón*."

Now, as he heaped the flakes on a blanket, making a mound of the heavy shreds which, gravitating together for several eons, had welded themselves together, he wondered whether Pacifico Ortega had actually understood. He was not sure that he had fooled the wrinkled little major domo by pretense of keen interest in tobacco culture. As for Alma, that remained to be seen; she'd have her chance to choose between planting, and a heap of the pure stuff.

Being a man of character, Bailey was not letting any girl herd him around with a ring in his nose. While proper for carabaos, for colonels whose wives ran the regiments, and for similar cattle, it was not for one who went into the Cordilleras and returned with his head on his shoulders instead of in the trophy collection of an Igorot connoisseur. So, instead of getting an assayer's receipt from Baguio, Bailey would wait until Alma returned from her rounds of the mountain settlements, and was back on duty at the hospital at Kiangan, so that she could get the full impact of gold, heaped gold, dull yellow and heavy, pastry-flaked by the pressure of rising and sinking ledges during the centuries of Luzon's emergency from the sea.

With this good thought, with this assurance of victory, Bailey retraced his path.

Neither Kalinga nor Bontoc wondered if he had found what he had been seeking. They had long since become accustomed to his circuits. They reasoned that *anitos* drove him along through the jungle. Perhaps he spoke to the gods, perhaps the gods spoke to him, but whatever happened, he was harmless, for neither miners nor constabulary ever followed in his trail—and this was proof enough that he had not found gold.

HE was halfway between Banaue and Kiangan when nine planes in *V* formation whirred south. They flew so high that he could barely catch the drone of their engines. Army planes heading back to Baguio, he concluded, but the second flight, the third, and the fourth which presently followed made him frown in perplexity.

Later, others winged from the northeast. In spite of all MacArthur's complaints about not having enough air power to protect the islands, he seemed to do fairly well. And presently, when Bailey heard far off blasts, he concluded that this must be an all-out war game, with practice bombing, though at times, he could not be sure, for the rumble was something to be felt rather than heard.

Another *V*, lower than the first ones, joined the southward flight. Instead of a red circle in the center of a white star, which in its turn was placed against a blue circle, these had solid red discs on their wings. The tips had smaller discs from half of whose circumferences red rays reached out to the end.

The rising sun of Nippon! This was the day for which Douglas MacArthur

had been preparing these past five years, while the politicos in Manila had called him a saber-clanking militarist.

For a moment, Bailey could hardly believe that he saw solid red circles, but those rays at the wing tips could not be illusion.

And neither was that earth tremor, nor the compression of air which choked him as might a monstrous straitjacket when, some minutes later, he rounded a curve.

The oily black fumes of TNT were spreading. There was no bomb crater in the road; instead, an avalanche of mud gushed down the hillside. For two thousand years, the Ifugaos had built terraces, stage after stage, mile after mile, and now a blast had torn out a retaining wall. There was not a military objective short of Baguio and Camp John Hay. In the lowland rice fields, a bomb would cough up a geyser of mud, and nothing would be the worse, but here the work of months was destroyed.

"Which is why the yellow ———s did it!" he growled.

His mind became a tangle of thoughts: they'd blast the hospital at Kiangan. . . Ifugaos would revolt, cutting down any Americans they found, for a plane was a plane, and their imaginations could not reach beyond the ribbon shaped rice fields; wing insignia meant nothing to these primitive folks . . . a plane was the evil magic of foreigners and by the ancient law of retaliation, the first unguarded head would be sliced off as partial indemnity.

He beat the pony across the rump, and followed the trotting animal. Gold was something you can carry. In his confusion of wrath and alarm and lingering incredulity there was a touch of triumph. This was the very best proof that raw gold had its value. Instead of being rooted to a plantation, one could head for home, and arrive with something to show for the trip. There wouldn't be any collections taken up for a penniless refugee from Luzon.

Perhaps the thought of war was what gave him a queer tingle of regret and exultation and, also, a sense of relief—for instead of being a specter which threatened, hostilities were now a fact.

Landslides were an old story to Bailey, who had seen entire mountainsides let go.

He was too busy to wonder if the primitive Ifugaos would blame the bombing on American troops and declare a feud against all whites; and he had even more to occupy him when he reached Kiangan.

Refugees jammed the road. Constabulary, wearing G-strings, tunics, and campaign hats, tried to check the rush. Nipa-thatched shacks and market booths blazed; flames gutted the hospital, and the schoolhouse.

"Go back and help!" he yelled at the shock-headed Ifugaos, and at the bare-legged women who fled with whatever they could salvage from the market place. "It's over now, go back! Help the people in the stone house!"

Some continued their flight, but many turned back toward the smoking ruins. Bailey, caught in the current, could only hope that Alma was safe in some settlement too insignificent even for the Japs to bomb.

BY THE time Bailey reached the plaza, he had forgotten all about the raw gold which weighted his pack horse. The magnesium fumes of incendiary bombs spread in dense white strata, and the blue white glare illuminated the deepening shadows. Members of the constabulary swarmed over the ruins, dragging out patients. Dr. Perez and a handful of native girls were attending to the injured, who were being laid out in one of the nipa-thatched sheds which had escaped the destruction.

Alma should be there with the Filipino doctor, now if ever. But this was no time for private queries, for Perez, with his hands full, was handicapped by the loss, temporary or final, of most of his equipment.

"Capitán" José Fu-Yao, half-Chinese, half-Igorot, had turned out in full uniform of his own design, since he was a self-made captain. He wore a Norfolk jacket; his white pants were stuffed into the legs of his most valued possession, a pair of gum boots he wore only on formal occasions, such as *cañaos* and receptions.

"*Señor Capitán,*" Bailey hailed.

Fu-Yao turned from the Ifugaos he was encouraging, and bowed ceremoniously, lifting his hat. "She is over there, *señor.*" He gestured toward the shed. "It is a pleasure to see you. You have arrived in time. Now pardon me while I get these *taos* back to work!"

Bailey, abandoning his pack horse, shouldered his way through the throng of returning villagers, and into the nightmare hospital, where bare-legged girls knelt among the overturned baskets of gabi, string beans, and camotes. Alma's pupils were doing their best to remember their lessons in first aid and sanitation.

Then he found Alma, though he would not have recognized her except for what remained of her white uniform. She was stretched out on a bamboo bed which, torn from its wall lashings in a nearby shack, had been propped up on two pockets of rice.

One eye stared blankly out of the bandages that swathed her face. Her arms were wrapped all the way to the shoulder, with only her fingertips exposed. Thin little Dr. Perez looked up from putting the final touches to a traction splint on the fractured leg of a Bontoc spearman.

"She is not as bad as she looks," he said. "Burns, first and second degree. Blazing alcohol from the dispensary. But she won't be marked."

"Oh, hell, who cares? I mean, she'll live?"

"In a few weeks, she'll be none the worse. She'll shake off the opiate in a few hours, and then you may speak to her."

So they had her pumped full of morphine? She must be in bad shape. Bailey's dismay smothered his moment of relief. Dr. Perez went on, "Painful, but not as bad as you think. I played what you call the dirty trick, giving her a hypodermic. Otherwise she would have tried to carry on and help us. Her hands were hardly touched."

"Can I help, Doctor?"

"Anyone can. Start cutting splints."

Bailey turned his horse loose, after taking off the saddle and flinging it into a corner heaped with market debris. As he cut splints, salvaged supplies, and at

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times took a hand with a stretcher, he pieced together the news.

In the bombing of Baguio, a good many army planes had been destroyed on the ground, but the survivors had taken to the air and were fighting it out with the invaders. Meanwhile, parachute troops were landing, only to be mopped up by companies of Philippine Scouts. At Aparri, where the Rio Grande de Cagayan emptied into the China Sea, army planes were blasting the Japanese landing parties, and to the northwest, at Vigan, MacArthur's air force was machine-gunning the Japanese beach head. Down in Legaspi, the Japs had established an airfield. They were advancing on Manila from at least three directions, apparently trying to tempt MacArthur to spread his small army over an impossible range of territory.

CHAPTER II

THE YELLOW BELLIES

BY morning, Bailey had made up his mind. The ruins of Kiangan were crowded with improvised cots, screened from the rain by strips of rattan matting. Baguio, regardless of present damage, would remain a target; certainly that was no place for Alma to recuperate, so he said to Dr. Perez, "I have a tobacco plantation over in Isabela. Why not move her over there? You're short of supplies, you're overworked and overcrowded."

The doctor pondered for a moment. "Why not? It would really be better."

Four Ifugaos carried Alma in a litter. Bailey tumbled into a carabao cart with his pack saddle and supplies. There was even room for Purita, Alma's amah, who insisted on going along.

For the first time, he saw some good in his tobacco acres. And after three days of travel in a carabao cart, any place looked like home.

Alma said, "This isn't a picnic, but it's better being useless and on the move than useless and up there in Kiangan. It'd drive me crazy, seeing so much to be done, and unable to do a thing."

"Standing the trip all right?"

She laughed behind her bandages. "Makes me feel like the Queen of Sheba, being carried in a palanquin. Don't worry about me, if I hadn't been in a dope, I'd have suggested just this. I've been dying to get another look at your new plantation."

He did not tell her about the loot he had brought from the mountains. Save that until later, when the fleet came from the States to team up with the Asiatic Squadron and blow the Japs out of the water. Pearl Harbor was only a temporary setback. MacArthur could hang on for a couple of weeks, and by then it would be simple enough getting to Manila. There, a heap of nuggets would have a genuine impact! Time to leave the Islands anyway.

The tobacco crop had been set out during his absence. Women and children went up and down the rows, weeding, and picking off the big green worms which ate the tender leaves. Pacifico Ortega, wrinkled Malay face puckering in a smile, came from the bungalow to meet the procession, and to welcome his *patrón*.

The house was on piers, to allow air circulation to dissipate the vapors exhaled from the steamy soil. The verandas were screened, and so were the windows; the floors were of polished narra planks. Sampagita and *dama de la noche* climbed over the building, and tall trees shaded it. Not a bad place, if you liked plantations.

In a few weeks, Alma would be ready enough to check out and head for Java or Singapore or Australia, and then home. Now that he had made his stake, the States were the place. This bit of bombing, for all its ruin, had played into Bailey's hand, or so he told himself as he rode over the fertile acres with Pacifico Ortega. That pleased the major domo, and Alma also, as she watched him from the lounge, back there on the veranda.

WHEN parachute troops landed at Ilagan, only forty miles north of Bailey's plantation, companies of khaki-clad scouts, grim little men who loved their work, went north in trucks to mop up;

and planes from Baguio staged dogfights over the Cagayan valley. Though there was no radio at Bailey's bungalow, the natives had their jungle telegraph. So he told Alma how Colin Kelly had bombed a battleship at Aparri, and how Scouts had routed invaders at Vigan, chasing them until darkness blocked the pursuit.

"And Igorots are turning out with their old axes, honey! They're tickled silly, now that it's open season, and head hunting's legal again, provided it's a skibby's head you bring in. It's grand out here; a plantation does have its points."

"I ought to be up in Baguio, helping Dr. Perez," she insisted. "My hands are all right, and if nothing else, I could tell the native girls what to do."

"He'd run you out! Honest, I didn't kidnap you. And just because you're coming out of it so quickly doesn't mean you're fit for duty."

She sighed. "Well, maybe not. Tell me more about the tobacco."

He tried not to grit his teeth. Tactful falsehood certainly had been justified, those first days when Alma had carried on by sheer nerve, since, short of opiates, nothing did much to relieve burns, except time. But while it was still too soon to bring out his golden hoard, too soon to break up his pretense, each day's bluff was making the ultimate revelation a nastier task.

Then it seemed that war would take the decision from him. Baguio was raided again and again, and paratroops landed in such numbers, up the Cagayan Valley, that the hard-fighting Scouts could not hold their own, much less mop up. Much as dates and numbers were scrambled, there was no denying now that MacArthur's gallant Gugus and their American comrades were outnumbered ten to one, were threatened by three converging columns. And the Japs who continued landing at Aparri, began to march up the new highway which followed the Cagayan River, now that they had seized the airports at Tuguegarao and Ilagan.

When they nailed the landing field at Maguilian, Bailey said to Alma, "Baby, we've got to get you into the mountains. Baguio's done for! Tanks came up from San Fernando, and the summer capital is shouting *banzai* and liking it."

She regarded her scarcely healed forearms, and said, "Well, I can hoof, and I can even ride a *pinto*. Here we're off the highway, but if we leave, we'll get right into the worst."

No chance yet to spring that mighty heap of raw, tawny gold. He couldn't tell her, not after she decleared herself equal to plunging through bamboo and thorny rattan, through leech-infested forest, and swamps whose mosquitoes buzzed like far off bombers. And then the Japanese advance guard came rumbling down the highway, tanks in the lead, trucks following. It was too late even to head for the mountains.

Flanking parties, going across country to guard against guerrillas who might menace the column, swarmed over the plantation. Baily, watching the motorized main body, was enveloped before he realized that no advance would be without flank guards. He was caught flat-footed when Captain Higaki's patrol came up to the bungalow.

Bailey said to the major domo, "Pacifico, tell your people to keep their heads. You can't argue with an army."

The captain understood English. He showed all his teeth in that vacuous skibby smile, and said, "Very prudent, Mr. Bailey. Now, making sure, we inspect for concealed weapons."

Bailey had to swallow all retorts. Certain that Higaki would not take his word for anything, he said, "There's a shotgun, pretty well rusted up, good for snipe shooting."

The captain motioned for Bailey to go first, for the little man took no chances on a stab in the back! A sergeant followed; meanwhile, the rest of the detachment inspected the shacks of the laborers, which were not far from the bungalow compound.

THE Jap got the gun. More than that, he sent for a squad to turn the house inside out. When the inspection reached Alma's room, Bailey said, "We have an invalid in there."

Higaki wanted a look. Alma displayed

freshly unbandaged arms. "Your bombs, hitting the hospital at Kiangan."

"So sorry."

Whether he meant that he regretted there having been any survivors, or just sorry, was not entirely clear. Bailey drew a deep breath when the encounter ended without an explosion which would have caused an incident. He was about to congratulate himself when he learned that all the rice in the storerooms had been seized.

"Now, I pay current rate, *pesos* three seventy-five the *cavan*," Higaki announced. He took out a billfold and a pad of receipt forms. "Sign acknowledgment of payment, please."

Higaki counted out notes which very much resembled Philippine currency until one looked a second time; the stuff was printed by the Imperial Japanese Government. Bailey said, "Thanks, what'll I do with it?"

"Legal tender, money of new order." And without a trace of irony, he went on, "To celebrate liberation of Philippines from bondage."

Bailey wondered how long he could keep his head, not only figuratively but literally. The thought of his golden hoard was all that sustained him; for regardless of how much printing press currency flooded the country, gold was still gold. As for the rice, camotes would take its place. Chickens squawked. Well, a flank guard could not dally long enough to round up all the poultry. And a few of the caraboas would be overlooked.

The place was thoroughly stripped, Bailey decided, when he saw that all but two water buffalos had been rounded up. There would have been a clean sweep, but for the pair who, submerged until only their nostrills reached from the water, had missed detection.

Then Bailey's rage flickered out. He wanted to laugh and slap Higaki on the back. The monkey man had, come to think of it, played right into Bailey's hands! You couldn't hide livestock, you couldn't carry a plantation, but a bag of nuggets was something else! He handed the sheaf of bills to the looter and said, amiably, "Give these to the Red Cross, Captain Higaki."

The Jap pondered, then shook his head. "Forbidden. But thank you so much. Imperial Nipponese War Relief, yes."

He even hissed politely, and arranged his face in a toothy smile. Bailey went on, "Come back again, Captain, when the tobacco is ripe. This Isabela leaf is the best in the world."

When Bailey turned toward the veranda, Alma was standing in the doorway, looking death from her one unbandaged eye. His grin faded, and he dashed up the steps to whisper, "Oil the little stinker, we can't fight, get rid of him, horse him along, savvy?"

When she did not answer, he went down into the compound again, to watch Higaki form his patrol; but the ordeal was not over. From the compound of the plantation hands came a high, wavering yell. A Malay was going wild.

"Watch it!" Bailey shouted, and bounded past the startled captain.

He hoped only to be able to intervene before one Malay, running amuck, started a riot which would end in a wholesale massacre. When he cleared the angle of the compound, Bailey knew that he was too late.

Pacifico Ortega was hurdling the kicking remains of a Jap soldier. One sweep of his working bolo had sliced the man from left shoulder to right hip. The pieces were not held together by as much as a shred. The soldiers, recovering from their amazement began blazing away. Ortega, however, was charging, and nothing short of total demolition will halt a Malay.

TIME stopped. Bailey felt as though he were watching a slow motion picture. There was a heap of bolos, all the household implements of the plantation laborers, where they had stacked them at the command of the invaders. Every "weapon," as the Japs called those choppers, had been surrendered, except Ortega's. And the major domo was not being disarmed.

He took fantastic strides for a man five feet four. A squad of Japs blazed away at him. Slugs whined and zinged; they kicked up mud; a few seemed to hit him. Though his white shirt was

dotted with red splotches, he took another stride, and yet another enormous bound. He stumbled, picked himself up, and with scarcely a pause in the flailing of his blade. A Jap whose rifle jammed, dropped it and ran. The shooting went wild, covering the width of the clump of bamboo shacks. A second soldier fled. The others stood.

Ortega ducked a bayonet thrust, slashed, wheeled. Another bayonet caught him in the chest, but did not sink fully home. Ortega caught the rifle with his left hand, and jammed the weapon home, until he pressed against the muzzle.

His blade whisked in. The two fell in a heap.

Only then did Bailey realize how little time had passed. Higaki, still in the act of clawing for his pistol, had covered no more than half a dozen yards. He was just beginning to shout orders. The sergeant trotted forward, and shot the first soldier who had fled instead of standing fast.

It was all so far beyond reason that Bailey regarded it calmly. When he noticed Alma standing beside him, he said, "Sorry, old girl, I should have let you take your chances with bombs. Nobody but a Malay could do a trick like that. I've heard of such things, but I never believed it."

The soldiers had now packed up the bolos, though this was needless. Only one man had been keyed up to go amuck, and he was through. Bailey walked toward Ortega. They had with weight and force managed to extricate the bayonet. Bailey did not know why he approached what was left of his major domo, and certainly there was no reason for Alma to go with him. But they both went.

The man should have dropped ten paces farther back, he should have died seconds earlier, of those bullet wounds, but he still lived, and that remaining life was enough for him to grin and say, "Those *bugaos,* robbing my plantation, then taking—even my bolo."

"We'll be following you in a hurry, Pacifico."

Alma wiped the froth from his lips. The smile faded, and the eyes went blank. Bailey helped her to her feet. "He went the Malay way. Chin up, baby, we'll face it our way, and to hell with them!"

Then he got the final shock: as a fusillade shook the clump of bamboo shacks, Captain Higaki came out, smiling.

"Sufficient reprisals. Burning down buildings as warning. For your good cooperation, nothing additional in penalty."

As he spoke, thatch began to crackle, and joints of bamboo popped like firecrackers. The survivors of the impromptu execution ran out, others crawled. A squad with torches approached the bungalow, to be sure that it did not escape destruction.

Then Alma said, "Captain Higaki! Just a moment before you set the house on fire. Dig under the steps and take the gold dust. For your good cooperation." She turned on Bailey, and screamed in a voice too high for any human throat, "Or do you want your gold —after Pacifico—fought for your land?"

There was nothing to say, nothing to do, nothing to think, so he stood there, and watched Captain Higaki scrape the earth away from the bag of nuggets.

"Sufficient indemnity, Mr. Bailey," the captain said. "Hence no domestic arson."

And the odd thing of it was, he did spare the house.

CHAPTER III

DEATH WORKS OVERTIME

THE following day, Alma said to Bailey, "It'd be useless and stupid, I guess, saying I am sorry about that gold of yours."

Bailey sighed wearily. "Skip it. After seeing Pacifico go *jurmentado,* after spending a couple seconds wishing I'd had guts to do the same, since it looked a lot like a firing squad for all hands—well, it was a twist that did things to me. And after what you've been through —I guess the old feminine intuition told you that for a while I was getting a solid kick out of being able to prove that compact pay dirt is lots better than acres."

Life came back to her eyes, and she cut in, "*Hectares,* not acres, won't you ever learn?"

"Ground you can't tote around. Right?"

"Oh, I caught that from your wise smirk, but what touched me off was Pacifico. And listen, Dave, don't ever be silly enough to think I expected you—"

"To run amuck like a good Malay?"

She nodded. "I went *jurmentado* in my own way, I guess. And the reason I passed out a second later was that I realized what I'd done—I was ready for you to go off your chump and finish Higaki."

"Huh! You think I love gold dust that much?"

"No, but you've chased nuggets the way Pacifico nursed this plantation."

Then Purita came in, and said, "*Señor,* the padre who held the funeral services for Pacifico and the others sends a messenger with some things he begs you to keep for him. The Japs are more likely to loot the pastor's house because it is so near the church. There is more safety here, he thinks, since you have already been raided."

Bailey went out into the compound, where a *tao* waited with two pack horses, each carrying a pair of rattan hampers.

"Tell the padre that it's a pleasure, but I hate to be responsible for altar fixings or valuables."

"Oh, *señor,* is not that; those are buried safely. Is the wine cellar, and he wishes you to keep for him whatever you do not want to drink yourself; better Christians have it than pagans. And the cigars, also, help him smoke them."

When Bailey set to work stowing the bottles, he began to appreciate the priest's sentiments. Most of the hoard had been laid down before the Spanish American war: fabulous Amontillados and Olorosos from Jerez de la Frontera, perhaps the only wine in all the world which could endure so many years of tropical climate without spoiling.

Purita whispered, "You must open one and drink before the man goes, so he can tell the padre that you like it."

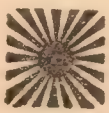
It took everything but an act of Congress to loosen the cork. Bailey poured an ounce, and in that moment realized that never before in his life had he really tasted wine. He said to the *tao,* "Tell Father Hilario that I know now he must be a very holy man, or else he would never draw a sober breath."

"He would not have trusted this to any but a sober person, *señor.*"

The cigars were made from Cagayan leaf, and in sealed humidors, each containing vanilla beans, and a brandy-soaked sponge. These also were too good for any Jap!

It was not until a week later that Bailey began to feel the shock of having lost eight hundred ounces of gold. Perhaps that was because Alma, practically recuperated from her burns, had ceased to be an invalid requiring constant attendance; perhaps because the blow had been so severe that it had taken him days to react to it. It had taken him as long to feel the horror and the splendor of Pacifico's fury; and he had been very calm during that flight from bomb-torn Kiangan with a girl drugged to a merciful stupor.

So in self-defense, he went out with the new major domo, and just stopped short of picking tobacco worms with his own hands. He had to stop thinking of eleven years of wandering among the cold high peaks to make a stake which had been whisked away by a Malay's fanatic valor, and a sick woman's hysteria. Hemmed in on all sides by war, there was no escape, not even the chilly solitude of the Cordillera Central. He knew that he could never again find another pocket, and he was afraid to risk the danger of talking to himself.



BAGUIO had been abandoned. Forty Jap transports had landed at Atimonan, down in Tayabas Province, where the coconut trees are tall. MacArthur blasted a hundred and fifty landing barges at Bantangas, but the yellow devils still came on, splashing through a surf red with the blood of their fellows, and charging up a beach carpeted with their own dead. Manila, declared an open city, had been raked with bombs. And then, heading north, came a col-

umn of men such as Bailey had never seen.

Not Japs, but Scouts and constabulary, the remnants of companies and regiments blasted out of all semblance of organization in the many engagements at Baguio and points south, while others were the survivors of the mopping up detachments which had been overwhelmed at Ilagan, fifty miles north of the plantation.

They were ragged, grimy, bandaged; their only bright spots were the teeth, and their weapons. They had little ammunition left, and as for rations, they were living off the country.

The column, skirting the tilled fields, headed for the bungalow. Far off, and barely visible, were flank detachments. Bailey went to meet them. He was not surprised to see that a noncom was in charge, that there was not even a lieutenant.

"What can I offer you, Sergeant? Help yourself. Two carabaos, some chickens, all the camotes you can carry. I have no medical supplies, but there is an Americano nurse who can look after your wounded, and as well as a doctor."

"I am Julio Vega, *señor*, and I thank you. The only wounded who need help are those who could not keep up with us."

He was casual about that. When things came to this pass, it made no difference whether a man was killed outright, or merely disabled so that he could not march. It was all very simple to Vega. Bailey had no words, so he looked at those drawn faces and those unnaturally bright eyes.

Vega smiled a little. "Some are not soldiers. Me, I wear a headcloth, and that man—" He pointed at an Ifugao who wore a G string with beaded trappings, a cape, and a campaign hat. "He wears my hat, for the uniform, you understand. So he is not a guerrilla, but a regular soldier."

They had been dividing up pieces of uniform equipment. One, carrying an Igorot head axe, wore shorts and leggings. Another armed with a bolo and a Japanese pistol, was proud of a constabular tunic. It was a magnificent nightmare. Bailey said, at last, "That comprehends itself, *Señor* Sergeant Vega, but it is not clear to me why you object to being mistaken for guerrillas—you do not seem to be the kind of men who are taken prisoner."

Vega grinned appreciatively at that grim humor. "Of course not, *Señor* Bailey. It is for the morale, no?"

There was not enough of the priest's sherry to go around, or Bailey would have broken it out to the last bottle. He compromised by saying, "I have a few cigars of the best. Make yourselves at home. How many are you?"

"This is the advance point. I send a runner back."

Whoever commanded this ragtag army was taking no chances. As he fell in step with Vega, Bailey asked, "What officer leads the main body?"

"Until today, there was no officer. We are here because no one lived to command us."

Bailey choked, and then shivered a little. American or Filipino, Scout officers stood their ground, and went out in front; the Douglas MacArthur touch, that touch which made privates and

corporals, meeting by twos and threes, gather together into an independent force, and go on the prowl to look for more trouble.

"Until today . . . You mean, you now have an officer."

Vega crossed himself. "God was generous, the holy saints were kind, there was an Americano major who escaped from those *bugaos chingados! Jesús, María y José!* Stumbling along, we enlisted men, we bushwhacked a company of monkey men two days ago. Now with an officer, and with their rifles—you comprehend, ours are better, but Jap cartridges don't fit."

He pointed north, toward Ilagan, and made a cutting gesture.

And when, half an hour after the point had passed the plantation, the main body plodded into view, Bailey began to understand Sergeant Vega's eloquent hand motion: death would be working overtime. Some of the Bontoc men trudged along with Japanese heads dangling from their packs. The collector's spirit was flying high; knotty-legged mountaineers would be creeping up, snake silent, on sentries who challenged only when they heard, or saw, something approach.

One didn't hear a graduate head collector. One didn't even smell him, for he maneuvered against the wind, infinitely patient. It was probably painless, tramping one's post, wistfully thinking of hot *saki,* and the *yoshiwara* back in Tokio . . . or of the Mikado and Nippon. . . .

But these men, for all their stealthy slaying, wanted a leader, an Americano; now that the saints had sent an officer, they would wage a war, not a head hunting party.

IN SPITE of riding a horse the size of a Newfoundland dog, the major looked his rank. He dismounted as from a charger sixteen hands high, when he could have straightened his long legs and let the pony walk from under him. His chino khaki uniform, pale gray from much laundering, still had a good deal of starch, though the color of his campaign badges had run just a little.

Switching his boot leg with his riding crop, he stalked toward Bailey. "I am Major Frost. Thank you for the kindness to Sergeant Vega's detachment."

"It's little to offer you, sir; the skibbies cleaned me out, except for two carabaos, and one's a tough old bull."

"Beef is beef, Mr. Bailey!" Major Frost stroked his straw-colored mustache. "And a house is a house, I assure you, sir. A miracle it wasn't burned over your head! Any news of the enemy?"

Bailey told one of the plantation hands to have Purita heat a bath for the major. Then he answered, "Rumors, yes. I still don't understand it, but it works almost as well as radio. They say that a motorized column is going to pull out of Ilagan any day. And that's something your men can't tackle by hand, I'm afraid."

The major, when he was presented to Alma, made an impressive jackknife bow. "A bath—and chicken! Miss Raynor, do such things still exist?"

"Heaven is where you find it, Major. The house is yours."

Bailey got the opened bottle of sherry, and poured some into teacups. "A cocktail substitute, sir. To bigger and better raids!"

Alma cut in, "Poison to Hitler and Hirohito!"

The major bowed, passed his cup slowly along the edge of his mustache. His nostrils flared, twitched a little. "Incredible, Mr. Bailey! Nothing like this has left Spain for thirty years."

He rolled a drop on his tongue, savored the nutty dryness, the exhalation of bouquet. Bailey said, "You appreciate that stuff, and more than I do. Give me Bourbon! Tell you what—guess the vintage, the brand, or whatever the earmarks are, and the mate to the bottle goes into your *siki*-bag."

"Oh, Dave, that's not fair! Give, or don't give."

"Bet you can't, Major!"

Ironic brows lifted in good-humored condescension. "Not to wager with my host, sir, but as a sporting matter—"

He seated himself, comfortably, cocked his legs, closed his eyes to thin slits, and dreamily, slowly inhaled the bouquet.

Sergeant Vega knocked at the door, then entered. "Sir—"

"Wait a minute!" The voice was iron. Vega jerked to attention.

Bailey watched the major resume his wine tasting. He took another bird-sip, tilted his head, let the golden-pale wine trickle home. He swirled the cup, till the bead clung to the very edge. A minute passed, and a second. He looked up, smiling, and said, "Mr. Bailey, it is hard to be *certain,* but this is Noguera-Jimenes. It has no vintage year, it is a *solera* bottling, the *solera* of 1865."

Bailey showed him the bottle. On the faded label was the trademark of Noguera-Jimenes of Jeres de la Frontera: Amontillado of Solera 1869. "Almost on the nose, Major! Kill this one, and take its mate with my compliments!"

Finally the major had time for Sergeant Vega, who reported that the outguard was posted and in order. That settled, he was ready for his bath.

Bailey overtook the sergeant, and offered him a glass of wine.

"I do not know, *señor*—thank you—I am on duty."

"Then some more of these cigars, Sergeant."

"A thousand thanks, our field marshal smokes none better."

"Sergeant, between the two of us, you understand, I want you to tell me something. Why did you answer the questions I asked you when you came up? I shouldn't have asked, this is war."

Vega shrugged. "But, *señor,* you are an Americano. This is your war, your general leads us, that *muy valiente. Jesús, María, y José!* An Americano, an Englishman, they speak the same language, they hate the same people, they have the same friends, what kind of a pig would I be to give you a short answer?"

"Thank you, Sergeant. I only meant, very brave men are sometimes too honest, if you had mistrusted me until you looked into things, I would not think less of you."

Vega's face lengthened a little. "You are not much older than I am, *señor,* but you are wiser. Do you see, that is why it makes us brave when we have an American officer to lead—he has it here —" He tapped his forehead. "As well as in the heart, no?"

"Not to wager with my host, sir, but as a sporting matter—"

Bailey considered for a moment. "As outguard commander, you are almost like an officer? You do not have to stay at a fixed post, or walk a beat?"

"In the land of the blind, a one-eyed man is king. *Seguramente,* in my way, I take the place of Lieutenant Ugarte y Guevara, may the holy saints bless his soul!"

"Then stay in the compound, and let me send you some of the food we are fixing for Major Frost. You do an officer's duty, you can eat an officer's food."

"That is kind, and it has certain logic. My thanks and respects, *señor.*"

BAILEY went into the house, gave Purita orders to give Vega her nearest approach to a banquet. Then he tapped at Alma's door.

"But I'm dressing—"

"Grab something, quick!"

He gave her perhaps ten seconds, and barged in. Though he heard the major splashing away splendidly, Bailey whispered, "What do you think of that guy?"

"Dave, why ask me that? Why ask anyone that?"

"You little fool, you checked up on me! Can't you check him, or does a woman trust everyone but the fellow who's a bit whacky about her?"

A slow, queer smile twisted her face. *"Then I am not crazy?"*

He caught her arm, saw her wince, and let go. "What was wrong with the picture?"

"I've never seen an American officer who would snap off a sergeant, not in the field. There may be Americans who know their wines like that chap does, there may be a few in the service, but that man is leading half-dead soldiers against a motor column—it's inhuman, being able to call a wine by name. Unless he's absolutely sure he has the enemy whipped."

"MacArthur did almost that very trick in France, or so the story goes. Wine and chicken, for press correspondents—the poor devils nearly died when they realized that the general was entertaining them in the front line trench."

Alma shook her head. "MacArthur was leading a victorious division. This man is leading—oh, God, it hurt me to see those boys! They're one step short of being zombies! They've died, days ago, they're moving like Pacifico Ortega moved."

"Baby, I missed that. What choked me was that the man actually knew Noguera-Jimenes bottling. Father Hilario had a little note wrapped up in one of the baskets, telling me that the stuff was never exported—he meant, commercially—out of Europe. A man who recognized that—"

"Can't be an American?"

Bailey nodded. "*Maybe* English, but to know a museum piece like that means you've got to drink bottles and bottles of it, from year to year."

Alma was tense and white, and tears were trickling down her cheeks; helpless fury shook her. "But what can you do? Can you tell the men that a Nazi is leading them into a trap instead of into some good head hunting?"

Bailey grimaced from pain that was almost physical. He shook his head. "They'd hew me down for my trouble. That man is all soldier, and what a soldier! They know damn well the man's real, the answer to their prayer. They speak Gugu English, how'd they suspect when I can't pick a flaw in his speech—there's no accent."

"The voice isn't—Dave, there's nothing wrong, but it isn't just right. No Filipino in the world could catch that little something. The major was tired, suppose he did snap off a sergeant."

Bailey paced the straw matting. "They *have* got ramrods in our army. Suppose he is the real McCoy, where would I end? Suppose he's a fake, how can I prove it?"

"Take a drink and pray," she said. "We need a lot of the last. Now run along, I've got to be as pretty as the red half of my face will let me. I've got to be gay—oh, get out!"

Bailey went into the living-room and downed three quick jolts of antique Amontillado. And while he did not as much as mutter a prayer, he got a sudden lift from a foggy corner of his brain.

That little voice fairly screamed, "The dirty son's a phoney! When a man's been over here long enough to wear bleached chino khaki, he hates the sight of chicken, he hates that damn blasted *pollo* like the devil hates holy water! And this guy's staging an act, he's studied his lines, he knows that Americans are supposed to be nuts about fried chicken, he hasn't gotten around to urping when the word is spelled!"

But this enlightenment, he realized the next moment, came from Satan: vain wisdom, a knowledge he could not use. Imagine telling Sergeant Vega, "This man says he can't wait for his fried chicken, and did you ever hear of anyone who could do more than look weary when the *pollo's* trotted out?"

Hardly enough reason for a sergeant to put his commanding officer under arrest as a spy and an alien enemy.

CHAPTER IV

GUERRILLA ARMY

BAILEY chewed a cigar, and thumbed over a heap of rotogravure supplements from back numbers of the *Manila Tribune*. Each issue had pictures of

World War Number One, and Ditto Number Two, a step by step record of corresponding weeks. Hitler . . . Musolini . . . Chamberlain . . . parley, parade, conference . . . reviews . . . dictators shaking hands, pledging eternal friendship . . . bemedaled dignitaries saluting as *der Fuehrer* and *il Duce* strutted past . . . swastikas . . . fasces . . . all the trimmings of treachery.

Bailey picked up a few copies, a few cigars, and went into the compound. "You read English, Sergeant?"

"But yes, the speaking is too awkward to please you, your Spanish is so rich, I understand it better."

"This may amuse you. The pictures. Major Frost is tired, he plans a battle. He needs wine to strengthen him, to make him sleep soundly. But you must awaken him in time. So stay here."

"That understands itself. My respects and thanks."

He took the rotogravure supplements, and began looking at the soldier pictures. He had to live up to the compliment: an educated Americano offered him something to read, and by the holy saints, he would read until he fell on his face. If the major needed a hand, well and good; the men on outpost would not be napping.

Dinner was gay, as gay as Alma. "Major, we've only one wine, but sherry is proper with every course—or is it champagne, I'm thinking of?"

Frost was in a splendid humor. "This Amontillado would glorify a roast peacock, and it would make corned willy a banquet."

Alma's makeup, and the dim flame of cocoanut oil lamps masked the lingering red of healed burns. Bailey marveled at that, and her capacity for sherry.

"My dear major, just because we don't have pipestem glasses, you musn't turn up your nose! Happy landings!"

Purita kept the small Chinese cups filled. Bailey was ice cold inside; he had the curious impression that his *self* stood somewhat apart, watching a visiting nurse, a Nazi spy, and a tobacco planter laughing and chatting.

Bailey should have been giddy. He knew, however, that he would fight the stuff until, without warning, he fell on his face; there would be no gradual approach. The difficult thing was to become boisterous, almost maudlin, and still keep himself in hand. Yet he did just that.

Alma was playing some game of her own. That smooth silky laugh! That sparkle in her eyes, and that invitation in her smile—all for Major Frost, and with each toast, a subtle challenge. An Officer of a desperate and independent command, backing down when a woman called for a refill? Of course not!

"The man's grand," Bailey told himself in his strange lucidness. "Running a bit wild, getting fire in his eyes, but not telling his right name. . . . How in hell does *she* stand up?"

Purita had worn herself out, opening more of Father Hilario's treasures from old Spain. Bailey belched, choked, stumbled to his feet, and Alma gave the major a knowing look.

"Purita, my cup is empty!"

Bailey lurched down the hall, listing port and starboard. His mind, however, was clear, for what he proposed was enough to keep him sober. He thumped headlong into a Borneo chair, and began to snore.

During lulls in his orchestration, he heard the major's sparkling repartee. Alma laughed gaily, and countered, "Wine isn't all that's wasted on him, poor chap. . . . He'll be in a stupor for the next three days."

Alma, Bailey told himself, must have some insane plan; nothing this side of madness could sustain her against that flood of heady wine. And that alarmed him. If she went wild, and settled the man during his first off-guard moment, the sergeant and his head hunters would make Captain Higaki's visit seem like a board of education inspection.

He straightened up, and did not stumble as he went down the steps to the compound. Sergeant Vega snapped up out of the darkness.

"The reading was excellent, *señor,* but the eyes become tired."

He gestured toward the amah's little shack in the corner of the inclosure. "The light kept her awake."

Smooth enough to be convincing. Bailey hoped for equal smoothness. "I think

the major wishes to give final orders before he goes to bed; it is getting late. But it might be better if I ask him if he is ready right now to see you."

THE laughter had subsided. There was only a murmur, a confidential, low-voiced huddle inside. Bailey shed his straw slippers. Vega, after marching all day, had of course taken off his shoes, hanging them by their laces from his neck.

The heavy narra planks had not a creak in them. There was not a sound until Bailey reached the threshold. Alma was murmuring, wine-drowsy, "Major, careful of that side of my face . . . ."

Bailey raised his hand in the gesture so often pictured in the front page of the rotogravure section, and snapped, "*Heil Hitler!*"

A very mellow major dropped a very mellow girl, clicked his spurs; he raised his hand, and the words echoed, crisp, military, guttural—"*Heil Hitler!*"

Then the major's face changed. The look in Bailey's eye made him jerk back, reach for his belt, but vainly, for he had not worn his pistol to dinner. All this in an instant, an endless instant that stretched and yawned terribly as the split seconds of Ortega's rush with a bolo.

A pistol blazed behind Bailey. Major Frost recoiled against the wall. He clutched his stomach. His legs buckled, and he pitched forward, numbed by the .45 caliber slug that had driven his belt buckle against his spine. Sergeant Vega bounded into the room, knelt beside the major, deliberately set the muzzle within an inch of the ear, and just as deliberately squeezed the trigger again.

"Is not an Americano," he said. "*Señor,* my head hurts, I am thinking too much, ever since I see that you do not like the major. Sometimes I watch you tonight, you and the lady drink too much, I do not trust the officer who drinks too much. I look at the picture too, and still I do not understand."

"You didn't do so bad, Vega."

Alma began to laugh. "Oh, my God, Dave! And here I was waiting to see if he had phoney papers. Waiting for him to get drunk enough to tell me the story of his life, waiting to see if the laundry marks in his coat matched his name!"

The plantation hands were turning out; members of the guard came on the run, and Sergeant Vega had his hands full. Bailey, meanwhile, was busy shaking Alma out of her laughter.

"Snap out of it! If this fellow was leading the boys anywhere, it was straight into a trap. Stick your finger down your throat and get rid of that sherry. Purita, take care of her!"

He raced after Vega. The babbling and shouting had suddenly died out. There were muted sounds, stirrings and stealthy rustlings in the gloom.

"Keep lights on," Vega said. "Help them find where we are not."

Being in active command again, he started to put on his shoes. He said to one of his men, "Get that *cabron's* boots, belt, every damn all!"

A runner came from the farthest pickets to report that villagers a few miles beyond the outer guards had brought word of a Japanese battalion of infantry, making a night march across country; the motorized outfit was taking the main road. The major had planned nicely.

"You see, *señor?* How it might have been?"

Bailey nodded. The major, parachuting from a plane, could have landed with a well planned scheme for organizing, then trapping all the guerrillas who prowled in the province.

In less than half an hour, the plantation was deserted, though the bungalow's lighted windows had a cheery look. Bailey turned back, shook his head, and said to Alma, "There'll be a lot of broken glass before this show is over. By the way, I haven't the foggiest idea where these lads will head for when the party is over, but you and Purita and the others better duck for the hills; the Japs will have a grudge against planters, some time right after sunrise."

"I hope I won't have to wait too long for news. Lord, my head's splitting—don't ever say sherry to me again! I am sorry about your fifty thousand *pesos.* You've got to come back, and soon."

He had scarcely rejoined Vega when the sergeant said, "We have saved the major's uniform. Put it on—then you will not be shot if you are captured."

At the first halt, Bailey gritted his teeth, and put on the outfit, gory tunic and all. But he took off the golden maple leaves and pinned them on Vega's shoulders. "You're more of a major than I am."

Bolos and bayonets flashing, the howling Gugus enveloped a line of skirmishers.

THE rest of the march was something like walking on air. After the drawn out misery of tripping a spy, this stealthy advance was just a stroll in the dark.

He was too nearly burned out to be as shaky as he should have been. His wits wandered in circles. For a while he was afraid that he would develop a full blown case of jitters, and make the sergeant ashamed of him; then that fear passed, and he said, almost audibly, "Just another zombie, we're all zombies, we're dead and we don't know it yet. . . ."

Where the hell were all the other zombies? Why didn't someone say something. . . . Who was that clumsy chump stumbling through the brush. . . . Damn if it's not pretty nearly daylight. . . . Riding crop's a grand thing to carry, you slap your leg with it and look nonchalant. . . .

Then there was a far off popping and whacking. The zombies yelled like fools.

The shooting was way off to the right. We've missed the train, someone

else is going to town! Then he saw that he had arrived, that he was in it, that the long crescent of howling Gugus and dancing blades and flashing bayonets was enveloping a line of skirmishers who were blazing away at a distant plantation house.

The skibbies had surprised a force which was not there. Bailey began to understand the distant popping which had started the rush: a scattering of Scouts, baiting the trap. Vega, marching in a wide curve, was nailing Mr. Moto from the rear. Literally nailing, and with bayonets, though the boys who had nothing but working bolos, or head axes did well enough.

It was not a battle, it was a massacre. Bailey went through it very much like a mechanical toy, until he finally remembered he had a pistol. The bad thing about it was he was afraid of hitting a dancing zombie instead of a Jap. He got in two shots, at long last, when a man broke clear of a closing cluster of Scout bayonets. And Bailey was still flicking his riding crop when Vega gasped, "Now we run like hell, maybe somebody finds out it is all a mistake and they start bombing."

They passed the order along. It was obeyed in only a little while longer than it took to snatch rifles and bandoliers from the dead.

Later, as they crashed through the fringe of jungle, Vega said, "Maybe they are worried when they see the major on the wrong side. That was very smart, swinging the whip."

Planes did turn out, but with considerable waste of gasoline, for the zombie army had scattered into the jungle, and the thickly wooded hills. It was nearly noon before Bailey and Alma found cover which gave them a view of the distant plantation.

Smoke rose from where a bungalow had been. "I think," he said, "that you and I are going to be mountaineers for the duration, just like these guerrillas. When the Nippies found their Nazi major, they must have suspected us of foul play. Outside of the Mountain Province, we'd last about ten seconds."

"We can do a bit of prospecting, between raids on the Japs."

Bailey chuckled, slapped his boot with his riding crop. "Oh, nuts for *that!* Could I have kept up with the boys if I'd carried eight hundred ounces of junk? Now, the nice thing about my plantation, the Japs can't carry it away. But turning those nuggets into dollars, how long'd they have lasted, even if I'd gotten them home?"

Alma eyed him approvingly. "Gee, you are grand, now that you've gone off the gold standard. Though I could have told you that right at the start, you dope!"

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Lumberjacks and toppers have an axe song for their choppers;
Sailors have their chanteys when they loose and reef their sails;
But none can carry with 'em the tantalizing rhythm
Of a gang of darkey road hands laying railroad rails.

"Shake 'em easy, shake 'em light,
Shake 'em, boy, till you git 'em right.
Shake 'em, boy, got tuh swing it out an' beat it.
Shake 'em, boy, make it sweet enough tuh eat it.
Clickety-clack, take yo' mallet an' yo' jack,
You got tuh lay dem rails so dey'll hold de enjun's weight.
Clickety-clack, put yo' gauges on de track,
But you better lay 'em level an' you better lay 'em straight!"

There's a big bull-dozer tractor that's a rough and ready actor;
It yanks a grove of oak trees out to clear a right-of-way.
Then it crawls along and scrapes it and dumps the dirt and shakes it
Till the road-bed humps behind it like a snake of hard-packed clay.

"Shake 'em easy, shake 'em light,
Shake 'em, boy, till you git 'em right.
Shake 'em, boy, ef you want to git tuh heaven.
Shake 'em, boy, you got tuh lay dem cross-tie even.
Clickety-clack, take yo' mallet an' yo' jack,
De boss man's on de enjun an' he's got no time tuh wait.
Clickety-clack, put yo' gauges on de track;
Ef you aim tuh keep on eatin', better spike dem rails down straight!"

NOTE: A "shake" in road-gang parlance means one heave with a crowbar. It may be done by a single man or several men at once.

The foreman's keen inspection has to figure the direction
Where the rails need shaking forward or the rails need shaking back,
And the men with crowbars follow, for it's trouble that they swallow
If they fail to shake the bends out and a freight car jumps the track.

"Shake 'em easy, shake 'em light.
Shake 'em, boy, till you git 'em right.
Shake 'em, boy, dere's jus' one way tuh do it.
Shake 'em, boy, de white folks never knew it.
Clickety-clack, take yo' crowbar an' yo' jack;
Git a rhythm in yo' shoulders an' a smile upon yo' face.
Clickety-clack, when you got tuh lay a track,
Boy, de only way tuh do it is tuh sing dem rails in place!"

The foreman shouts his order to a darkey on the border
Of the road-bed, he's there setting kind of lazylike and slim,
He's a-setting there and singing while the other men are swinging,
And he doesn't need a crowbar, 'cause the rhythm's shaking him.

"Shake 'em easy, shake 'em light,
Shake 'em, boy, till you git 'em right.
'I love a gal dat's six foot two,
She doan' love me but her sister do.'
Two ties up an' half a shuffle over,
Bring it down tuh me about the width of yo' hand.
Rice is in de cookin' pot, bees is in de clover.
Shake 'em, shake 'em. Now, drop 'em where you stand!"

When the rails are straight and steady there's a diesel engine ready,
And the ballast-filled gondolas that are heavier than sin
Pack the road-bed like the devil but they never get it level,
Till they dump the gravel ballast, jack the rails and tamp it in.

"Shake 'em easy, shake 'em light,
Shake 'em, boy, till you git 'em right.
Shake 'em, boy, dere's jus' one way tuh do it.
Shake 'em, boy, de white folks never knew it.
Clickety-clack, take yo' crowbar an' yo' jack,
Git a rhythm in yo' shoulders an' a smile upon yo' face.
Clickety-clack, ef you got tuh lay a track,
Boy, de only way tuh do it is tuh sing dem rails in place!"

Like a lot of watches ticking, sounds the crowbars' rhythmic clicking,
Clicking louder, clicking sweeter than a million dinner pails;
Till you're sure you'll shake a seven when you roll your chance on heaven,
If you once can ride that rhythm when the road gang's laying rails.

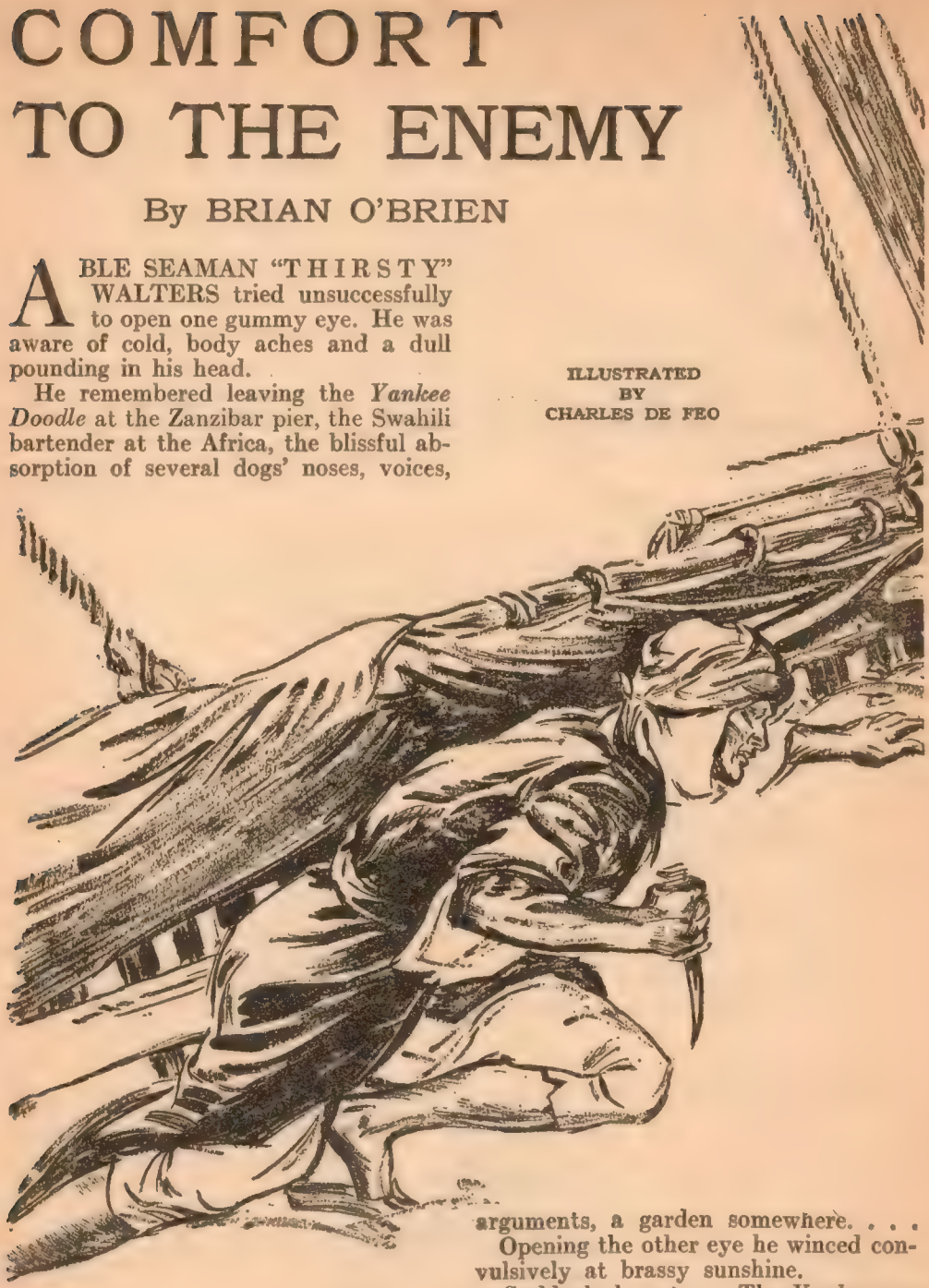
"Shake 'em easy, shake 'em light,
Shake 'em, boy, till you git 'em right.
'I married a gal in Baltimo'—
I got two chillun but she's got fo'.'
Shake 'em, boy, there's jus' one way tuh do it.
Shake 'em, boy, de white folks never knew it.
Clickety-clack, take yo' crowbar an' yo' jack;
Git a rhythm in yo' shoulder an' a smile upon yo' face.
Clickety-clack, ef you got tuh lay a track,
Boy, de only way tuh do it is tuh *sing dem rails in place!*"

DECORATIONS BY I. B. HAZELTON

COMFORT TO THE ENEMY

By BRIAN O'BRIEN

ILLUSTRATED BY CHARLES DE FEO



The Indian balanced on the poop, waving a red cloth. . . . Thirsty drew the dagger from his belt.

ABLE SEAMAN "THIRSTY" WALTERS tried unsuccessfully to open one gummy eye. He was aware of cold, body aches and a dull pounding in his head.

He remembered leaving the *Yankee Doodle* at the Zanzibar pier, the Swahili bartender at the Africa, the blissful absorption of several dogs' noses, voices, arguments, a garden somewhere. . . .

Opening the other eye he winced convulsively at brassy sunshine.

Suddenly he sat up. The *Yankee* was due to sail at dawn!

A bottle tinkled. He picked it up, sniffed the odor of arrack, tilted it and dropped it with a groan. Empty.

Stumbling to his feet he reeled against a mouldy, white-washed wall. He stag-

gered away and hopped, cursing madly at a stubbed toe.

Blime! He glared down at himself. He was starko! Naked as an egg.

Indescribably s h o c k e d, Thirsty blushed to the fringe of pale hair behind his ears, covered as much of his muscular, tattooed body as his arms could manage and sat down on a doorstep.

Rolled! Some thieving Arab must have stripped him while he was drunk.

Shivering, he sidled down a narrow, sloping alley, face to the wall, like a weatherbeaten September morn. Shuffling footsteps approached. Thirsty ducked into a deep doorway. Then, peeping out, he confronted an Arab, tall, thin-bearded, in white turban, burnoose and big yellow slippers.

"Gotcha, ye monkey-faced footpad!" Thirsty grunted, and let fly with a knobbly, freckled fist.

The Arab gulped and dropped. Thirsty, still growling, shucked him like a banana. First, the turban which he wound about his aching head; then the burnoose which dropped over him like a shirt on a handspike. The baggy pantaloons were slack in the seat, but Thirsty grabbed at a belt complete with curved, silver dagger and pouch to keep them up.

"That'll larn yer to rob honest sailors," he said severely, and shuffled down the alley, stumbling over those enormous slippers.

He hoped he was going in the direction of the pier, and that the *Yankee* had not yet pulled out.

She was one of the American destroyers transferred to the Royal Navy, now detailed to the Mozambique Patrol and nicknamed by her crew the *Yankee Doodle*.

She had put in at Zanzibar the night before for orders. And the Bloke had carelessly permitted liberty.

"Shoulda 'ad more sense," Thirsty mumbled, dragging the turban end across his face.

He knew his failing. T'wasn't fair, letting him in temptation's way like that. He stumbled over the slippers, turning into the Marina. Fifteen years in the navy and only A.B. Broke time and again for drunkenness. But he was a good seaman and the Bloke forgave him much. He brightened; might get away with it this time. He'd been off the list for eight months now. Last time—he shuddered at the memory—he was dropped for selling his shore-going gear for a bottle of Cape brandy in Durban. Now he was on the straight, and this had to happen.

There were people walking ahead of him and he slowed to what he hoped was a dignified Arabian stroll.

Then the toot of a siren lifted him half a foot from the ground.

The *Yankee* was a mile out, weathering the leper station outside the harbor.

"Strewth! Adrift!" gasped Thirsty.

And this was war. Missing ship in wartime meant desertion. And desertion —Thirsty began to feel faint—meant death!

He collapsed on a handy concrete block to think things out.

THIRSTY didn't know where the *Yankee* was bound for. The patrol extended from Mombasa to Durban. Regular as a shuttle. Calls at the Comoros; calls at Zanzibar. Not that they ever saw anything more exciting than *dhows*

laden with hides from Madagascar or cloves from Pemba. But the last trip had been different; right out in the Indian Ocean as far as the Seychelles.

Galley buzz said there was Jap planes based in one of them empty islands. Vessels had been bombed on the Ceylon run. Planes flying overhead had made signals for the *Yankee*. They'd only seen one derelict steamer that had been bombed or torpedoed, but something was up. And he was out of it.

Thirsty felt proper chokker!

He cocked a leary eye for police. The Bloke would have reported a man missing. And Thirsty didn't intend to be picked up by a crusher if he could help it. Meanwhile he was parched. But he knew that as an Arab he dared not try for an eye-opener; Arabs were notorious teetotalers, blast 'em!

He wandered to a public fountain and drank deep, groaned and made his way to the pier. An Indian customs man dozed in his office. There was nothing in dock but a battered old *dhow* loading across the basin.

He wondered how the hell he could get aboard the *Yankee*. If he was picked up he'd be shipped for a deserter, sure as shooting. But if he managed to get aboard and give himself up, that'd prove he was no deserter. Maybe the Bloke would let him off with overstaying leave. If he could get to Mombasa, maybe the *Yankee* would put in there—he hoped.

He shambled toward the *dhow*. Swahili dock wallopers headloaded great bags of cloves into her. He sat in a sunny corner to watch them. Suddenly he remembered the dagger and pouch in his belt. The dagger was murderously curved and sharp as a razor. The pouch? That brightened things up a bit. It contained seven gold Turkish pounds, twenty-two pounds in English Treasury notes, some silver and copper coins, a few leather amulets and a box of matches. Not so bad; he might be able to buy passage somehow.

He wondered where the *dhow* was bound. He moved closer. On the poop were two Indians. Thirsty started; they were talking English; evidently so the Swahilis wouldn't understand them.

"I go to get freight bills," one said.

"Aye. Mark them for Mombasa. We leave this night."

"Yes. But you stay to watch until you go."

"*Atcha hai!*"

Thirsty hunched down in his burnoose. What luck! If he could stow away in that tub he could show himself in the morning. Even pay his way if those Indians got nasty.

Comforted he moved off in search of food.

The hunt proved difficult. Arabs were everywhere and they all seemed to know each other. He shook with fear as he touched himself on head and chest as he saw them doing. Police eyed him until he cringed inside the scented robes. He managed to snatch a few bananas from a stall and dropped a copper coin to the market woman to stop her indignant squalls. He visited drinking fountains often. His head ached villainously. If he only had a dog's nose; just a slug of gin and a chaser of beer. All that money and he couldn't even buy a drink. He sighed dismally.

By evening he was at the wharf. A customs man was staring into the open hold of the *dhow*. Nasty-looking Arab sailors hung about and the Indian whispered to the customs man. Thirsty saw him slip a wad of notes to him.

"Thank you, Mr. Krishnaswami," the customs man said. "Good-night and good voy'ge to you."

Thirsty watched him move away in the gathering night.

"Bribery an' corruption," he muttered. "Wot's that for?"

The Indian shouted something to the sailors and went into a cabin under the poop.

Thirsty kilted the burnoose about his waist, yanked up the pantaloons and crawled to the edge of the wharf. A native boat was fast to the stern of the *dhow*.

He dropped into it and pulled it close to the larger vessel. Silently he climbed aboard. The hold was piled almost to the deck-walk with bags. For'ard the Arabs crouched over a charcoal stove, chattering sleepily. Silently Thirsty heaved a couple of bags to one side and made himself a tight little

cubby hole directly under the poop.

The smell of cloves almost sickened him, but he wrapped himself in the burnoose and lay quietly waiting.

Soon there were shouts and rowers towed the *dhow* out of the basin. He heard the creak of ropes as they hauled the lateen to the masthead. Then the *dhow* heeled a little and was under way.

Thirsty slept.

HE awakened to awkward pitching and a raging thirst. Poking out his head he ducked like a turtle as he saw an Arab on the deck. The man moved for'ard and disappeared. No lookout. Those Arabs were sailing by guess and by God, he figured. He crept out in the shadow of the cabin. Beside the door was a water butt. Thirsty drank some and scouted miserably for food. He considered waking the Indian, but land was still in sight; he couldn't risk being taken back.

Grumbling, he crawled back to his hole. Dragging at the bags to make a more comfortable bed his hands slid over a smooth edge. He fumbled over it. In one bag was a large, square tin. In most of the lower layers the bags were loaded with similar tins.

Smugglers! No wonder they'd bribed the customs man!

Thirsty slit the bag. It gurgled. He brightened. Alcohol, maybe. Then he cursed again. It was a four gallon can of gasoline; he could smell the stuff faintly above the cloves.

He decided to lay low. If they caught him now they'd knock him over the head and drop him overboard. He'd have to take a chance on making his getaway in Mombasa.

Disconsolately he resigned himself to wait.

By morning the *dhow* was rolling like an applewoman. It was stinking hot under the poop. Thirsty mopped sweat from his scrubby face and wondered what to do next. He tried a look-see. The sun was dead ahead. They were sailing east—and Mombasa was northwest!

"Wot the 'ell?" he muttered, then went cold all over.

That gasoline wasn't going to Mombasa at all. It was for the Jap planes.

Thirsty began to boil. Enemy agents, eh? Spies, eh? Bloody fifth columnists! Maybe he wasn't a deserter, after all! He breathed deeply. Maybe he was a bloomin' 'ero. If he could get away with it.

He drew that curly little dagger, meditating an attack on the Indian. No, he'd have a gun, sure as eggs. Maybe they planned to contact a plane in mid-ocean. Maybe a patrol would sight them. He would keep a weather eye lifted and sing out if he saw a British vessel close enough. And if he got the chance he'd slip that dagger into the Indian.

He chewed cloves to keep himself awake. But they brought on such a thirst that he nearly went crazy. He dared not sleep.

Once a sailor crouched on a bag not a foot from him. He thought of sticking him, but that wouldn't do; the others would get him in quick time. He lay back in the stinking darkness fighting off a terrible drowsiness.

When night came one of the Arabs lashed two lanterns to the mast. Signal perhaps? Thirsty wished he could get at that water butt. But the Indian squatted beside it.

Later a cold wind came up. The *dhow* heeled steeply and thunder rumbled ahead. The Arabs shortened sail as the vessel slid up and down enormous waves. Suddenly the *dhow* was outlined in white light, there was a mighty crash of thunder and rain lashed the pitching vessel. Sailors scrambled to cover the open hold with tarpaulins and the rain banged them like a drum. Thirsty crawled under a bulge in the canvas, pricked it with his knife and gulped the brackish water that seeped through. It gave him strength. That light-headed feeling left him. He let the water trickle over his shoulders.

WHEN day broke the storm was gone and sunshine baked the shabby *dhow*. Thirsty peered overside but he couldn't see anything. He had no idea how far she had gone. He was hungry now, his insides felt like water. But in that

Thirsty shucked the Arab like a banana.

open craft there was no chance of action without being seen.

Then, in the afternoon, he heard the hum of a plane. The Arabs crouched for'ard looking up. The Indian called orders and balanced on the poop waving a red cloth. A two motored plane swooped down on them. Thirsty made out red circles on its wings.

He sank back in his hole, drew the dagger from his belt. That plane would land and they'd transship the petrol. Well, he'd lay low till then and do as much damage as possible before they got him.

But nothing happened and darkness fell. He watched the lights on the mast. His tongue was swollen and he felt himself fainting or dozing. He was starving. . . .

He was aroused by shouts and the screech of a whistle.

He peered overside. A hundred yards away a submarine surfaced.

He was about to yell. But on her conning tower were streaky marks like a kid might make, not an honest number.

A Jap!

He bit his nails in panic. Then, suddenly, Thirsty Walters knew what he had to do.

Crawling deep among the bags he stabbed with the dagger into the thin-sided tins of gasoline. The heavy odor of gushing petrol nearly knocked him out. But he crawled as far as he could gashing every tin he could reach.

Then he crept to the side. The sub was drawing alongside. Lights flashed from the control bridge and someone shouted. The Arabs were for'ard with the Indian. Thirsty peered aft. The boat still dragged astern.

He reached for the painter and dragged it close, then cut it holding fast to the severed end. Then he fished that box of matches out of his pouch, struck one and shoved it in with the others. As the box burst into flames he dropped it onto the leaking gasoline and dropped into the boat.

There was a mighty flash, a dull boom, and yells.

Scared stiff Thirsty paddled frantically with his hands. There was a muffled roar as great flames gushed upward. The sail caught and flamed redly. Dull explosions shook the *dhow* and bits of flaming bag sailed through the air. There was a sharp whistle, yelled orders and the sub moved away.

Thirsty, cursing the absence of oars, was paddling with his hands trying to put space between himself and the blistering heat of the blazing *dhow*. Then, above the roar of flame, he heard a whining hum that became a scream. Bells jangled and the sub began to settle. Arabs jumped from the *dhow* to the submerging steel deck. The scream changed to the roar of machine guns and there was an almighty crash.

Thirsty saw the wings of a plane flash overhead. There was another explosion and a geyser of water almost swamped the boat. He bailed frantically. The plane returned and explosions tossed the boat like a ship. Thirsty shut his eyes and held on.

The rattle of gunfire seemed to come from everywhere. He tore at a thwart until he ripped it free and paddled with it. Then there was a groaning roar; the sea lifted like a hill, burst, and tons of water fell on him. Deafened, dazed, drowning, he fought blindly to the surface. His hands caught the boat, miraculously still on an even keel. He crawled aboard.

"Hell with it!" he sobbed and sat in the bilge to wait for death. "Call that

gratitood, arter all I've done for 'em."

Then an almighty detonation shook the ocean and the boat skittered like a thrown stone.

To Thirsty's horror the black, streaming bow of the submarine lifted close beside him. Like a knife it was, forty feet above his head. Water poured from ports in the deck. Then it slid back. There was another explosion, a dreadful, strangling stink and silence.

Thirsty glanced toward the still flaming *dhow*. It was leaking fire as the blazing gas flowed over the sea. He paddled hard as he could to windward. Then he heard the hum of airplane engines again. The plane flew low over him. He waved like a madman but the machine disappeared into blackness.

He fainted.

IT WAS light when he came to again. The charred hulk of the *dhow* gave off dense billows of black smoke. Thirsty's hands were blistered; his face felt like a mask. The sea was discolored with irridescent patches of oil. He dipped the burnoose in the water and dragged it over his head to keep the sun off. Then he lay in the sternsheets. He didn't care what happened now. He didn't feel hungry, not even thirsty any more. He only felt tired, so damn tired he wanted to die.

"Ain't a ruddy deserter, any'ow," he mumbled. "Bloomin' 'ero, reely."

He thought he heard something in the silence of that empty sea. Sounded like engines, a siren. Someone shouted.

He sat up.

"Bloody mirage," he growled.

Certainly looked like the *Yankee Doodle* though, four stacks and all. He lay back, exhausted, covering his face.

"Ahoy! Boat ahoy!"

He sat up again. It was the *Yankee* right enough!

The destroyer ran alongside and a boathook caught fast.

"Come on, Johnny, step lively," snapped a seaman.

Thirsty stared into the muzzle of a rifle. "Wot the bleedin'—"

Two sailors dropped into the boat and heaved him up.

"Dirty son," someone observed.

"Punch yer in the nose," he mumbled.

"Talks English, 'e does."

"Course I do, yer bloody fools," he snarled.

"My God, it's Walters."

The Bloke! Thirsty blinked in the face of the commander and tried to salute. Then he toppled forward.

Next thing Thirsty knew he was in a canvas berth in sick bay.

" 'Ow d'ye feel?"

"Not so dusty." He looked into the scowling features of Nobby Clark, sick bay attendant. Beside him stood the jaunty.

"Wot's 'e doin' 'ere?"

"You'll find aht, ye bleedin' spy," growled the master-at-arms. "I'm 'ere 'til they 'ang ye."

The door opened and the Bloke entered.

"All present, sir," Thirsty chirped.

"Are you well enough to answer questions?"

"Aye, aye, sir. But could I 'ave a bit o' tommy. I ain't ate for ever so long."

There were orders and Thirsty came out of another doze to scald himself with soup. His hands were bandaged and he felt fly-away and sort of weak. A fan droned above him and Thirsty kicked

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

HELP FORGE
THE TOOLS
OF VICTORY!

BUY U. S.
WAR BONDS
AND STAMPS

luxuriously under a sheet, a new man.

The Bloke came in again. "What were you doing aboard that *dhow*?" he demanded.

The jaunty stood by with notebook and pencil.

"I must warn you that anything you say may be used against you," the commander said quietly.

Something was up, Thirsty decided. The Bloke looked too serious for cuffers. He decided to tell the truth.

When he had finished the jaunty sneered openly.

"You don't seem to realize the seriousness of your position," said the Bloke. "It might aid your memory to know that finding the submarine that was transferring fuel from your *dhow* to the enemy aircraft was so close to one of the Seychelles group, we investigated and destroyed three enemy planes. A prisoner informed that a British subject was supplying the petrol."

"'Ere, 'ere," Thirsty gasped. "You don't think I 'ad anythink to do with that." His voice cracked. "I told ye, sir, I was tryin' to rejoin. I fired that petrol when I saw the sub. I didn't even know the petrol was there till it was too late to do anythink else." His voice faded. "S'elp me, it's the truth, sir."

There was stern scorn in the Bloke's tight face.

"What's up, sir?" Thirsty faltered.

"You are charged with desertion and of giving aid and comfort to His Majesty's enemies."

"I ain't no deserter," Thirsty yelled. "I'm on me third hitch. I tried to get back. I—" He stared at the silent faces, then turned his head to the bulkhead. "All right." His voice was muffled by the bedclothes. "If you thinks I'm a deserter and a bloody trafficker with the enemy, go a'ead an' 'ang me. I don't care. I ain't got nothink more to say."

He heard the commander leave and in the sickness of his heart and body Thirsty wept.

THIRSTY was fed that evening by a guard who refused to speak to him. By morning he felt stronger.

"I want to see the commander," he told the jaunty. "I must see 'im."

"Cawn't. Yer under close arrest until the enquiry."

That afternoon the *Yankee* docked at Zanzibar. Thirsty was marched to the wardroom where the Bloke and his junior officers sat sternly behind the mess table. A civilian eyed him closely.

"Will you tell us the names of the people you worked with?" he asked coldly.

The calm way he assumed he was guilty appalled Thirsty.

"I've told the truth, sir," he said earnestly. "I told the commander how I—I got drunk an' was robbed. I only wanted to get aboard that *dhow* to try an' rejoin in Mombasa. All I know is that there was two Indians in it. One was killed when the sub was bombed. The other is still 'ere. There was a customs bloke too, what took money from 'im."

"Could you identify him?"

"I dunno, sir. I don't think so; they all looks the same." Thirsty looked hopelessly from one to another. "But I 'eard 'im call the Indian by name."

"What was the name?"

"Wait a minute." Thirsty racked his brain. "I 'ad it on the tip o' my tongue. Kitchen—Christian—I cawn't remember, sir. But I'd know it if I 'eard it."

"Take him away."

"You'll go to Mombasa an' 'ang," growled the jaunty as he marched his prisoner along the deck.

Thirsty stared ashore. The dock was crowded and there seemed to be a disturbance outside the gates.

He balked at the sick bay door.

"Listen, take me back to the Bloke, will yer?" he pleaded. "I gotta stop 'ere. I can prove what I did that night if I can only go ashore. I was to the Africa, I was. I couldn't have made up with them Indians."

"You'll git yer chawnce, in Mombasa. Git in there."

Thirsty lay awake all that night.

In the morning he heard activity and the shouting of orders outside.

"They caught yer pals," the jaunty told him. "A customs bloke and an Indian, name o' Krishnaswami."

"That's the name!" Thirsty burst out.

"I 'eard the customs call 'im that."

"Well, they're aboard and they're comin' to Mombasa. Ye'll all 'ang together." The master at arms sucked a tooth and relaxed.

Suddenly there was the skirl of a bosun's pipe and Thirsty heard lines cast off.

"'Ere, I gotta see the commander," he shouted. "It's me life, I tell yer."

"Stow yer gab or I'll smack yer in the eye," said the jaunty. "Glad o' the chawnce, too."

The *Yankee* was moving.

"Listen—"

"'Old 'ard," the jaunty threatened.

Thirsty crouched on his bunk gnawing his fingernails.

There were whistles, bells. The door opened.

"Commander's cabin. Step lively."

The jaunty grabbed his arm and led him to the commander's cabin under the bridge. A tall, thin, white man with lined, yellow face sat there. Two Indians stood between sentries and a fat native woman squatted outside.

"This is the British Consul," the Bloke said. "Do you recognize these men?"

"Yus. That's the custom's man an' t'other's the Indian I saw give him money."

The consul called something and the native woman waddled in. She carried a bundle in her arms.

"Have you ever seen this woman?"

"No, sir."

"He lie. He t'ief," the woman bawled. "He steal drink. He run 'way. He rascal man."

"I ain't never saw 'er in me life," Thirsty declared.

The commander showed him two fibre tabs.

"Me identity disks," Thirsty gasped.

Then he gasped some more. There was a thin smile on the Bloke's face.

"This woman says that you sold her your shore-going whites for liquor. You drank that, then stole a bottle of arrack and ran away—naked. Is that true?"

"Blime!" faltered Thirsty. "I dunno, sir."

At an order the Indians were marched out, followed by the still squalling woman.

"Walters," the commander said, "we have the Arab you robbed, and the barman who served you at the Africa. The Indians deny having seen you before. In that case I shall withdraw charges of desertion to the enemy."

"Thenkew, sir," Thirsty gulped. "Thenkew!"

"But the charges are changed to overstaying leave while on active service, selling your uniform, drunk and disorderly conduct and highway robbery."

"But I ain't no spy," Thirsty said doggedly.

"In view of your services in apprehending the *dhow* and submarine, I shall overlook those charges."

Thirsty's head reeled.

"The cost of the Arab's clothing will be paid by the mess fund. Your uniform has been returned by the Swahili woman who has been reimbursed."

"Thenkew, ag'in, sir." Thirsty stood so straight he nearly overbalanced.

"I suggest you keep your uniform on in future," went on the Bloke. "There will probably be a medal on it soon."

"Blime!" gasped Thirsty.

NIGHTLY TO MILWAUKEE

By HARRY OLIVER

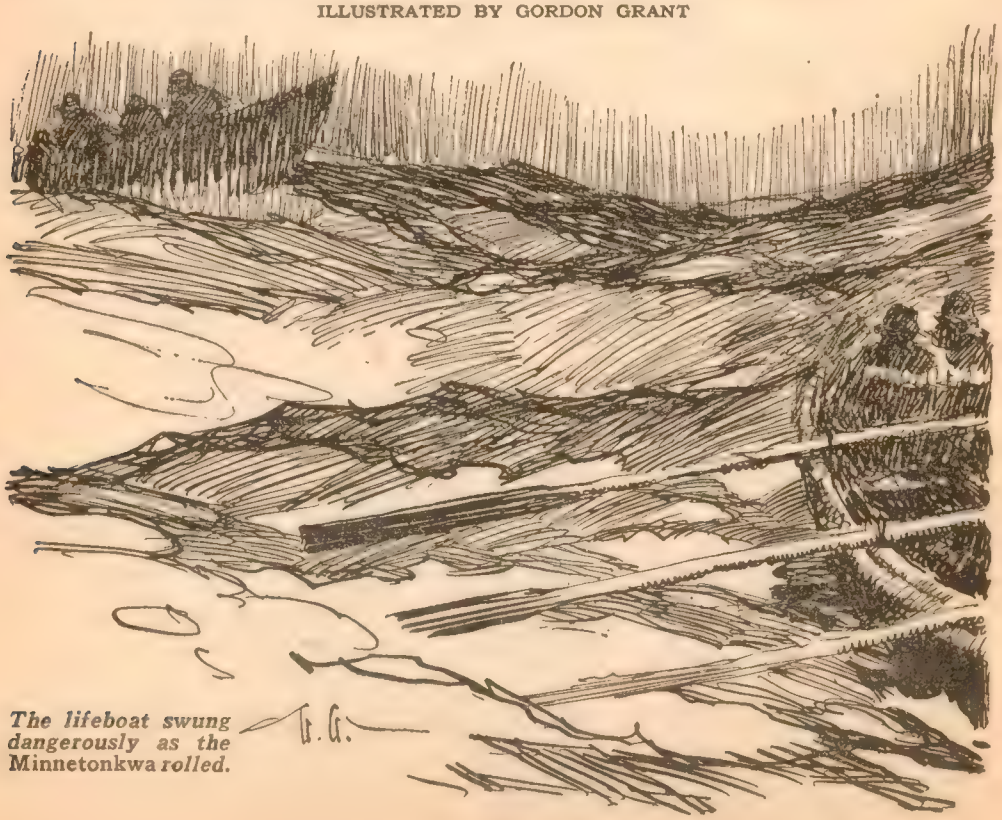
THE capstan was painted battleship gray, but the top had been left bare showing the red brass. Cut deep into it were the words—

S.S. Minnetonkwa
built by
The Menominee Shipbuilding Co.
Menominee, Mich.
1881

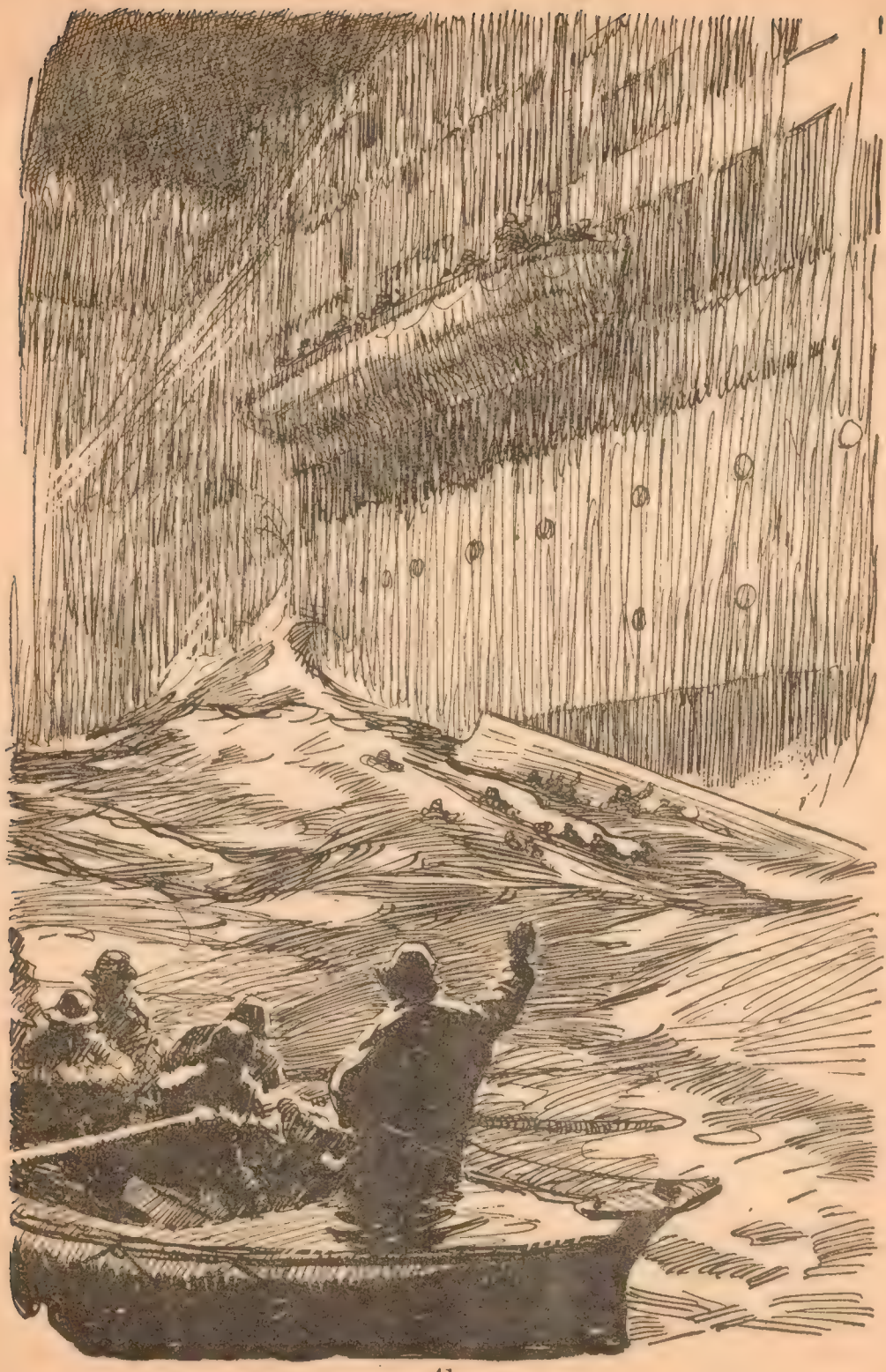
The ship had been fitted with donkey engines long ago. The capstan was never used any more; yet every day the deck hands polished it. Its face always showed a distorted reflection of the rest of the ship—the white superstructure, the little pilothouse filled with the big wheel with which they still steered her by hand, the rows of lifeboats, and the single stack sending out lumpy black smoke.

Lately Furman had been looking at the capstan too often, reading the inscription over and over again. It drew him, gave him an odd feeling that he had no right to be on this old steamship that represented another age, to be sailing her over the lakes as if she were

ILLUSTRATED BY GORDON GRANT



The lifeboat swung dangerously as the Minnetonkwa *rolled.*



The boy handed over a message—the Coast Guard storm warning.

a shipbuilder's product of his own day.

When he had come aboard her a few years ago to be her second mate, he had known that she was an old ship. Exploring her that first day, he had read the inscription for the first time. Now he could not go near it without reading every one of its letters.

The *Minnetonkwa* was a lady all right. She kept well painted and slicked up, but she didn't lie about her age; it was there for everybody to read. She was sixty-one years old.

It had been hot that July day when the *Minnetonkwa* had shot down the ways. Gus M. J. Stuhlmiller, sole proprietor of the Menominee Parlor of Photography, as the embossed oval at the bottom of his pictures stated, had sweated much under the black hood of his awkward camera, but his pictures had come out well. They still hung, faded and misty, in the smoking-room. Stiff-posed notables at the launching, looking very erect and uncomfortable in their choker collars and beaver hats.

They were good men, even if they tied their pantaloons under their boots, thought Furman.

They looked so serious with those beards without mustaches, he often wondered if they ever laughed. Perhaps they would laugh if they could see them now, running her with hardly a cent to do it.

They might have been looking sad in those pictures but they had certainly been making a fuss over the *Minnetonkwa* that day. They had banners and bands—it had been a long time since a band had played over her—and they'd turned out from every town on the lake.

Other photographs, taken later, hung beside Mr. Stuhlmiller's efforts. Celebrities, passengers of early voyages. Their signatures were scrawled beneath brief messages of gratitude for the comforts and pleasures of the ship, the courtesy and entertainment of her officers. Actors, writers, even a president and, of course, the General.

"We ought to throw those pictures overboard; forget those days," Furman used to say.

But the captain's daughter wouldn't have it; she loved them all, especially the one they took of the General on the top deck with his sword on his lap and all the pretty girls around him.

NOW the ship sat on the black river getting her freight. Above her on each side rose skyscrapers, making it seem from her decks as if she floated at the bottom of a deep canyon. A stream of cars, sleek and shining, passed over the bridge at her bow; speedboats roared by her sides. Furman walked up to the prow and looked up the river to where the long breakwater reached out on each side far into the lake. An artist could have been painted the day in angry blacks and sultry grays. The sky was melancholy with endless clouds. The wind had been rising all day; it was from the northwest and Furman knew it would keep on rising. Far out from the shore he could see the high wind-piled water of the deep lake. The breakers were forming out there to come charging in like armies of white-crested dragoons.

He turned and walked back toward the sheltered part of the deck, the wind so strong on his back he could almost lean against it.

Ballard, rangy, rawboned and tall, came striding along the deck. It always amused Furman to see him hurry so for

no reason, his huge hawk-like nose pointing his destination, his coat unbuttoned and flopping in the wind, long arms waving. He leaned against the cabin wall and lit his pipe, puffed with satisfaction for a moment, clouds of smoke whirling from his lips.

"Tobacco and coffee, lots of it, that's what gets you through a winter out here," he said. "Hot coffee, strong like Rudolph makes it. It takes a colored feller to cook. I feel good, damn it!" He came to the rail over the river side, bent over watching the sluggish movement of the current.

Behind them the wireless-room door opened and the boy came out. He handed Furman a message, one that he did not need to read:

Coast Guard Storm Warning. Advise all shipping remain in port. Ships at sea make for nearest available harbor.

How many times had he seen this familiar message? How many times had he disregarded it?

"Did you show this to Captain Sheldon?" Furman asked the boy.

"About an hour ago."

"Did he say anything?"

"He just grunted."

The boy loitered, reluctant to return to the loneliness of his cabin. Furman appraised his brand new cap, the wavy black hair it covered, the pink cheeks and clear brown eyes, the creased uniform. He was new on the *Minnetonkwa,* the wireless men always were. The rest of the crew for that matter, except the officers.

They watched a freighter turn into the river. She was a block long, lean and painted a rusty red. It took a long time for her to pass, her engines pushing her slowly, puffing and sometimes letting out a long sigh, tired from the long trip from Superior. The men on her decks waved, the boy and Furman returned the salute. Ballard kept his arms on the rail that was moving gently from the wash of the big ship. When she was past, he leaned over and spat slowly in the river. He muttered something and the boy looked at him curiously.

"You mad, Mr. Ballard, about something?" he asked.

"No, just sorrowful," Ballard replied, but did not elaborate upon the subject.

"She belongs at Gary, and Ballard thinks she ought to go there," Furman informed the boy.

"But she's just following orders, ain't she? The Coast Guard's instructions. They don't send those out just for fun do they?" the boy asked.

Ballard knocked his pipe on the rail. The wind blew the sparks down the side.

"There's two kinds of ships on these lakes, William, my boy," and he jerked the empty pipe after the passing freighter. "That's nothing but a big warehouse on the water, with a factory at both ends to move her. Comes the Coast Guard, says the wind is blowing. Git to bed! A couple of months from now comes the underwriters, says it's winter, too much wind, maybe ice, git to bed!" He leaned over and again slowly spat in the river.

"And again there's a few real ships on the lake," he added.

"How does this one class ? Do we stay in tonight, or is the trip on?" asked the boy.

Ballard's pipe jerked toward the big sign over the warehouse at the dock's side that read—

LOWER LAKES TRANSIT CO.
NIGHTLY SERVICE TO
MILWAUKEE
PASSENGERS & FREIGHT

"The nightly means *nightly,*" he said, and then added after a moment, "To be truthful though, we did miss a couple of trips back in nineteen twenty account of the ice."

In defense he added, "That's the winter she damn near froze clear across."

"The *Minnetonkwa* is an ice breaker, William. She's built for all year service. She don't get her picture in the magazines like a Swede or Russian boat, because she's too close to home, but we've had ice crushers on the lakes almost ever since there were steamboats," Furman said.

"There won't be any ice tonight, but just the same I'll bet you'll wish you were back on that Iowa farm when we get to banging around out there tonight," Ballard said dryly. "From now on the summer cruising is over."

"You're all going along, ain't you? I can take it if you can," remarked the boy with a trace of youthful bluster.

Ballard gave him a surprised look and strode off to his dinner.

"Don't pay too much attention to the old man, William. Freighters like that one cost about a million. They carry enough ore to build a block of skyscrapers. It just isn't good business to run them in storms, or after navigation closes in the fall and the insurance is off."

"How about the *Minnetonkwa's* insurance?"

"We haven't had any for years," Furman answered.

THE dining-room was under the foredeck. Its old time richness survived; leisurely workmen had carved its mahogany panels, and fashioned its heavy chairs and tables. Nothing here hinted of poverty. The thick carpet, fine stiff linen, the silverware, the glass that gleamed on the buffets, were all reminders of the ship's first days. Good food and luxury in appointments, a tradition of the Great Lakes, were important, even though it cost some of the last of the company's capital.

Furman sat down at the table where the captain and the others were already eating; they did not allow his arrival to interrupt them. He had often wondered at the matrix that had molded his life so closely to these four old men in their nondescript uniforms. The colored steward, Rudolph, was as old as the rest; he piled the plate before Furman with stewed chicken and a mountain of mashed potatoes. Furman was hungry and did not listen much to the conversation around him until the direction of it surprised him.

"There are twenty trucks on her tonight. But that's just the start. They have promised us a lot more as the winter goes on. We had to bid low to get the business, real low for even these cutthroat days, but it's still profitable. I thought you men ought to know. We can carry seventy-five and I think we will soon be doing it, because we can't be underbid on that kind of business. It's the start of something that means a lot to us."

Captain Sheldon sat very erect in spite of his seventy years. The weather had put a network of little red threads all over his features; his gray hair waved a little yet. There was more light in his eyes tonight than Furman had seen for many a year.

Nobody spoke at once, they had been starved for good news for a long time. Charlie Wade chuckled.

"It will be kind of a case of making the punishment fit the crime, won't it? Trucking almost put us out of business in the first place. Now we keep going because we can freight them." The purser picked up his coffee and drained it. His past was written on his face. He had been the wild one of the group, still was the dapper one, kept his hair and mustache dyed and looked ready to start all over.

"I don't see how we kept going after we lost the Michigan fruit business," he added.

Tonight they talked about things they had not talked about for a long time. Lately shop talk had been taboo and the ship had been run with little conversation except on subjects that formed an escape from realities.

Ballard was saying, "The railroads started when my old man was still sailing a schooner about here. He used to come in from a trip and scare us all saying they would put all the sailors in the poorhouse. Then he'd go out and get drunk as hell while the boys loaded the ship up again, and away he'd go. He sailed schooners right up until nineteen ten, railroads or no railroads. He was the kind that every time he unloaded a cargo, he thought he'd never get another. That's why I haven't said much about things these last years."

Furman swallowed his coffee that was yellowed with thick Wisconsin cream. "*Minnetonkwa* coffee" they called it; you couldn't get it any place as hot and strong. He looked out the porthole that framed city buildings of dirty brick and soot-grimed stone. It was getting dark, windows began to blink with lights. Mostly when he looked at that port, it was like a picture on the wall, a picture

that changed as she rolled, now showing the lake, its blue all laced with spray, then, as she moved up to the sky, another blue, flecked with little clouds.

"Take nineteen thirteen," Captain Sheldon was saying. "There was a boom year for shipping. Just before it they were laying hundreds of ships on the shore to rot. When it came they couldn't get them out fast enough. They sent me five miles up the Menominee River to get out the old *Larkspur;* we sailed her for two years, her bottom so rotten why it didn't drop off I don't know to this day. Ships were done then, they said."

The wind was rising; its howl found its way through the closed ports and doors into the room where the occupants seemed oblivious of it. The *Minnetonkwa* stirred in her berth. Furman made up his mind to check the stowing of those trucks before leaving port. Unexpressed even in his mind was the feeling that good sense should keep them in port that night. But when had good sense been a part of the winter lake? He looked at Sheldon but saw nothing in his face.

Carlson, the engineer, finished his meal and rose.

"Ships is the way to send things," he remarked with an air of settling the matter. They watched his broad back step out of the room. Fat, big-hipped, nerveless, he was a good man to have around.

THE cabin was chill and damp; it smelled of musty carpets and cushions. Furman lost the cheer and warmth of the other room as he entered.

"You missed chicken again tonight; pie too, blueberry pie," he said, as Cora came out of her stateroom.

"You tell Rudolph if he don't save me a piece of that pie—" She laughed, left the penalty unexpressed.

Furman looked at her, remembering the first time he had seen her, his first day on the *Minnetonkwa.* Leaning against the stern rail in a white dress, yellow hair flying in the stiff offshore breeze—

He had stared too long and she turned and smiled at his embarrassment.

"I'm Cora. I sort of go with the steamship. Captain Sheldon is my father, and you're the new second mate. Do you like the *Minnetonkwa?*"

"I'm Cora," she said. "I sort of go with the steamship."

"I think you're about the best-looking accessory a steamboat ever had," Roy surprised himself by saying. Then he had immediately launched into a long discussion of the technical points of the ship before she could reply, trying to cover up his embarrassment at having made a pretty speech.

Now she said, abruptly, "Roy, we all know about those offers you are getting from the steel company to take over the *Ira B. Wilkens.* And that chance you had with the Grain Transportation Company to have their new ship they launched last month. You shouldn't refuse things like that. You ought to move up. You're the best young officer on the lakes and a lot of people know it."

Furman looked down the long cabin with its high ceiling, the row of stateroom doors decorated with cupids, pink flowers and castles, the scroll work, the balcony above with its upper rows of staterooms, the hangings, and all the plush. This bright challenge to the gloom of the night was a little pathetic, a Victorian survival in a modernistic day. Glory borrowed from the river

boats of an era long since vanished.

"I would never fit in. I've often tried to imagine myself on one of them, living in streamlined quarters, all chrome and linoleum. I've lived my life on packets. I don't think I'd be happy without passengers and all the things we have. My father and his father before him sailed this kind of steamboat." He looked at her serious face and added, "Besides, you know, I'm supposed to have a girl on the *Minnetonkwa*."

"You could keep the girl just the same, Roy, you know." She smiled.

"And see her about twice a year, and worry about her staying faithful to me with all these handsome young officers around. You can't get rid of me that way."

She laughed, laid her hand on his shoulder for a moment, then changed the subject.

"Have they found any trace of the *Toledo No. 15*? It's a whole week now."

"Not a stick. They never will. That's the way car ferries go down. One minute they float and the next they are on the bottom. They don't have a chance once the water gets over the rear gate. That was a bad storm last week. They did find the barge though, and seven of the crew," he answered.

"It seems so senseless."

"It is, perhaps, but it's our own bargain. We promise to move the freight as fast and as regularly as a railroad or a truck can, and cheaper. People want their merchandise immediately, their eggs fresh, their milk sweet. Banks loan money on goods. They want it delivered and sold so they can lend the money again. It's the turnover they tell me. I don't know much about it."

"But the lives of our people pitted against just one day. There seems to be something rotten cruel about it," she replied.

He had never seen her like this before. He wondered if she felt the same about tonight as he did. She knew, as well as he, that iron is only iron and rivets only rivets. And she knew the *Minnetonkwa* as well as he did. He told her of the talk at the supper table.

"They say that youth is the time for optimism. I wonder. Your father, Ballard, and the others in there, they can see a new day coming for lake packets. They're building a new fleet already in their dreams. Maybe being through it so many times, ups and downs, does that to a person. You and I have only seen the downs so far."

CHAPTER II

FROM FIFTY-SIX TO THREE

THE cargo was no concern of the second mate. A long time ago Furman had, however, quietly taken over the ship, with no objection from the older officers. The make-up of the crew was odd in that they were nearly all boys, officered by the old men. The most able man aboard, Furman did most of the work; he liked doing it. The freight deck extended the length of the vessel except at the bow, where a space had been set aside which was filled with concrete to weight and enforce it for cutting ice; amidship where the engines extended from the deck below in the manner of lake passenger boats; and at the stern where the steering apparatus filled a little room. In addition to the trucks, there was more freight than they had for weeks. Most of it was boxed merchandise, but there was also a large shipment of castings.

The merchandise was well enough stowed. He inspected the shoring of the castings and called the carpenter who, with the aid of a couple of deck hands, reinforced it. The big trucks offered the greatest hazard, but he could do little more than personally inspect the blocking of them. Each wheel was tied with an iron clamp to the deck. He hit each one with a hammer, careful not to miss a single one, to be sure they were tight.

Satisfied, he got his sweater and raincoat and went on deck.

The wind was worse, and there was a fine cold drizzle. He idled a moment, leaning over the wet rail. The door of the wireless room was open, making a yellow square on the deck. The boy came out and together they walked around to the shore side. A few pas-

sengers started to come across the gangplank.

"That's something I can't understand," said the boy.

"You mean why anyone wants to ride with us, I suppose?" Furman asked.

"After the good weather is gone, like now and these last few weeks. If they want to go to Milwaukee, they can get there in two hours on a train. They can drive it in a little more. Even fly, if they want to. Warm, smooth and comfortable," the boy elaborated.

"The lake gets into passengers, Will, in the same way that it gets into all of us I suspect. The old man, the other officers and me. Cora has it the worst I guess. It will be the same with you someday, the lake or the ocean," Furman answered.

"I enjoyed last summer, every minute of it, and it ain't so bad even now, being paid for it and hardly any work. I didn't like that storm last week. I was glad when we hit Milwaukee. But why anyone will pay for being knocked about all night is more than I can understand."

"It's a good deal habit with the older passengers. This is the way they have always gone to Milwaukee, or Muskegon, or any part of the lake. It never occurs to them to go any other way. The young ones get it from their folks. They like the lake and this old steamboat and, I think, perhaps they like us. Like me, I suppose they like even the smell of it, the way it all mixes up—burning coal, cooking food, zinc decks, new paint, and the freshest air in the world. It's a good thing they do, we need the revenue. This is a lake passenger boat, young fellow. There's only a few left," Furman said.

He lit a cigarette, and was silent.

It was hard to watch a prosperous business rot. This youngster could never understand how hard. When it's the business you're bred to. From fifty-six ships, stout and shining, to three, old and shaky. The Lower Lakes Transportation Co. had lived on its fat for decades now. Selling ships, junking ships, living on the proceeds.

"From now on we get only regulars until next May. Like Mr. Edmonds down there, the one standing by all the sample cases," he went on, indicating an old gentleman as fat as he was short, wearing an old-fashioned stiff collar, so high and sharp it looked like it would push his little head off. "He rides with us about twice a month. Has for longer than I've been here. Never misses. He sells hardware and sells a lot of it, I understand. You met the Constables and their children last week. They're aboard long ago. Ride with us the year around. Most nights they put the kids to bed and sit up late on deck, spooning as if it was the first year, moonlight or none."

"They won't tonight," Will interrupted.

"There's Millard now, coming up the gangplank," Furman continued. "What he wants is a couple nights' sleep. He has insomnia and I don't wonder. He plays the market all day and poker all night. Says this is the only place he can sleep, with the rocking of the boat and the swish of the water outside his port. That was Dr. White behind him. He comes aboard to get away from his telephone."

Furman was talking more than usual. Again he realized that tonight's trip was somewhat on the foolish side. He stifled a feeling that he ought to order all these passengers ashore. It wasn't his place, he was only second. Were the older men, Sheldon and Ballard, just right, or were they living in some senile dream that might become a nightmare as the night wore on? Some winter night the *Minnetonkwa* was going out for the last time. Tonight might be that last time, if you knew the shape of things below, the old engines that Carlson teased along, the old hull that was due at the shipyards three years ago. He cursed himself for a morbid fool; brusquely he left.

ON the bridge Furman felt better. The lines of deck lights came on and lent a little warmth to the gloom. They shone yellow against the black water, except where there was a patch of red from the port light. Carlson was warming her engines, the deck trembled slightly. Furman watched another freighter pass up the river to a dock, blowing her whistles for the bridges. He walked over

to the pilot house and looked at the chronometer, reached up and pulled a rope. The river was filled with the blast; it echoed back from the skyscrapers, then died away mournfully. He walked to the bridge wing on the shore side and waited.

The inevitable last passenger ran up the gangplank and they pulled it aboard. He walked over to the engine telegraph and rang SLOW AHEAD. He could hear them banging the passenger port tight. The deck engines rattled as the shore lines came aboard. A lone loafer on the dock gave a halfhearted wave. Furman waved back and entered the wheelhouse. The boy at the wheel was silent as always. They passed the Coast Guard Station and he saw the three lanterns, the top red one, the middle white one, and again the red one at the bottom, the storm warning they were defying. Through the window he watched the flash of the lighthouse. They passed the breakwater and he felt her shear off as the first wave struck her. He walked to the engine telegraph and rang FULL AHEAD. He noticed Captain Sheldon on the bridge wing and stepped out, edging his way to where the old man stood against the wind breaker.

"Better head her northeast by north tonight, Roy," he ordered. A command that was unnecessary, but welcome to Furman, who was glad of the shared responsibility. Most always they kept to the coast. Tonight they would head way out for leeway, and to strike the waves at an angle. Then, at about Racine, they'd start to head in. He looked back toward the shore where a million lights were blazing, lighting the sky against the murk. Blue and red airplane beacons, on top the buildings, dotted the yellow glare, A little north the Lindbergh beacon swept the sky like a long white pencil. Other nights these lights kept him company a long way, tonight he would leave them far behind.

The city that the lake had built had long forgotten its builder. Under these lights it was at its pleasures, dancing, theaters, restaurants, hardly knowing of the storm even though the lashing surf was smashing the shore boulevards. Furman noticed that he was alone again. Sheldon had left, and if he had said anything as he went the wind had drowned his words. Tossed as she was, the *Minnetonkwa* was behaving well, handling each wave with unconcern as it crashed her bow and passed beneath her. His uneasiness began to give way to confidence, he became ashamed of his nervousness in the early evening. The old ship would spend her last days rusting away up some river just like so many others had, he thought.

But the wind still rose. A wind, it seemed, such as had never swept this lake before. It beat the wood of the ship with the ungodly thud of a sepulchral drum. It deadened his thought. He struggled to the wheelhouse, where the boy was wrestling with the wheel.

The waves were not high, but long and broad. They came against the ship as if shot from a cannon. Furman winced as each one struck, cursed the poverty that had cheated the ship of her annual drydocking so long, as he felt each one smash her. In the intervals he told himself she would endure. The *Minnetonkwa* had survived much. The bearded men who had built her had built her well, scorned the newfangled idea of using steel, made her sides of thick iron, each rivet an honest one. Each winter for more than sixty years the north wind had sent those long waves to batter her. Each winter ice had held her, often for days, trying to crush her, until at last she had wriggled her prow through it, made port. The success had been the *Minnetonkwa's.*

AT ten o'clock Furman usually would give a short pop on the whistle, then the steward would bring them coffee. Tonight he let it go. However, some time later they heard a kick on the door and the face of the steward, wet and worried, showed through the window. He had come anyway, juggling the tray somehow from below.

"That will go fine, Rudolph, thanks," Furman told him and added, "You shouldn't have tried it tonight just the same. Those legs of yours aren't as new as they might be."

"I guessed you needed it tonight, Mr. Furman. I made it strong. Those old legs is still good, it's my stomach that don't like nights like this. I'll bet even the fish down there are sick."

Furman smiled. "Hang on going back," he cautioned him. "Don't bother again tonight, we'll get along."

He drank a cupful, it was still hot. He spelled the wheelsman, letting him rest and drink some. The steering apparatus pulled against him taking all his strength. There was no chance to ease her against the waves, it was as dark as if they traveled through a gigantic tunnel. Only the Lindbergh beacon pierced the darkness every few minutes. There was a lookout man in the prow. Furman hoped he had sense enough to make himself fast.

The lake was a huge black map in Furman's mind. *Toledo Ferry No. 14* would be halfway across toward Ludington. Her sister ship *No. 15* was the one that had gone down last week. *No. 10* taking her place would be meeting her soon. The *Watseka,* the *Minnetonkwa's* sister ship, should be at about Racine. He wished he could get the *Toledo No. 15* out of his mind tonight.

Men wrestling with the iron that bound the string of freight cars to the rails. The hideous inferno of the long red-painted inside of her hull. Why in hell did they paint it red! The four long trains as they vomited out of the big mouth at her stern. Lightened, she must have lasted a bit. The whole black, wet world that had burst through that open stern. Down like a dish in a pan.

The *Minnetonkwa* was rolling now. Rolling more than he liked. It was 1:15 when the big one came. Though he could not see it he felt that this one was much longer than the ones before. She rolled, rolled clear over on her beam ends, then paused a long minute. Before she came back he heard it. It wasn't a loud noise, but it had too much clatter of metal to metal; it came from too far down to be just the wind.

A wave of sickness, nearly nausea, swept over Furman. He knew what had happened. As his lungs filled again he shouted to the paralyzed youth: "Put her over—over! Over!"

He grabbed the wheel and they both spun it. As she came about she listed less, worked herself straight, then rolled back, and again Furman heard it. Sheldon was in the room now.

"I'll take her. Go below and find out how bad it is," he ordered.

Furman passed a dozen white faces as he raced to the freight deck. He saw a jumble of smashed cars, castings and boxes piled fast against her side. As he watched the ship rolled again and as she came back the whole loose cargo hit her side. A thousand ton blow that should have torn her side out. He watched, fascinated. His throat went dry, dry and hot. Without thought of it, he turned and walked to a faucet, filled the cup that hung by it and drank, then filled it once more and as he drank again realized what he was doing. He saw a dozen deckhands watching him, stupefied. Into the anarchy of broken iron and violence he could take no man. Its force would reduce them all to a sodden pulp of flesh and smashed bone.

CHAPTER III

WATSEKA—STAND BY!

CARLSON stood in front of the throttle. He turned and cursed his men automatically. They paid no attention to him. Their bodies dripped sweat and blood, the iron of the ship battered them; there was no sense or reason to her movement.

He saw Furman and shouted above the din.

"She's wide open down there. The whole damn lake is coming in!"

"What can you do with the pumps?" Furman asked.

"Can't do a hell of a lot. The boilers aren't up to it. They passed their day for a job like this a long time ago. There ain't steam enough for the engines and them too. They might as well know it up there. We're forcing them like they were never meant to be, not even when they were new." His eyes sought the dial again. "No, they ain't got it," he added.

Furman took the phone; the phone

that sometimes worked, sometimes didn't. By a miracle it worked now. He said into the mouthpiece the things he did not want to say.

"Cut the dynamos, all of them except the emergency," he was ordered from the bridge. Furman spoke and the engineer turned a valve that put the ship into almost complete darkness.

The added steam spurred the pumps a little.

ON deck the list brought the red light so close to the water that it made a ruby splotch on on it, the green one was high above. These and the few lights left only made it blacker. You had to hold on to something to keep standing in the pilot house. She didn't roll so much now. Furman strained his ears to hear the *thud, thud,* as the cargo hit her side.

She must already have taken a lot of water to weigh her down like this.

Furman had too much time to think, while the engines tried to push them into Kenosha. He felt like a spectator now. The old men had taken her from him, Sheldon beside him, Ballard on the bridge wing outside, Carlson way down there, even the purser, wherever he was.

He sensed that they wouldn't make it, that the old *Minnetonkwa,* with her leaky boilers and loose engines, already belonged on the mud of the bottom. Alongside all those others, made of wood, made of steel, sailing ships of a century ago, gay steamers of the nineties, their machinery rusting, their fine carpets and furniture molding. A chain of ships that lay there from Chicago all the way to the Soo.

He heard the bell and put the receiver to his ear. He listened to the engineer and then said, "Carlson says it's coming in faster. The pumps aren't holding it."

The old man did not reply at once; he dug in his pocket and brought out his pipe which he carefully filled and lit. It looked odd seeing him smoke up here, he never had before.

He smoked for a minute, then said, "The *Watseka* should be close about. Ask them to stand by us."

THE wireless room was so small it hardly held them both.

"Where is the *Watseka,* Will?" Furman asked.

"She put into Racine about an hour ago."

"Try and get them," he ordered.

She was deep in the water now, listing bad. Furman became filled with a helpless rage against the waves that beat the old craft back and forth as he watched the boy finger the dials. Will was jittery and his ordinarily capable fingers were fumbling. He looked much older than his youth. The face that had been red cheeked and laughing was livid and pale now. He had come a long way in a short time from that Iowa farm, sunny and green, to out here. He showed the strain of listening into the dead earphones. Unnerved, he turned and almost sobbed, "They don't answer!"

"Are you sure of your outfit, William? Are all your damn gadgets going?" Furman asked him.

"I've been getting everything tonight. Why in God's name can't I get them now?" He turned back to his dials.

Furman longed for a quiet moment for him, against the howl of the storm, the clatter of the woodwork. Against instinct he slammed the door behind him. It was a little quieter then and he could hear the round farmyard oaths the boy muttered.

"The *Watseka's* operator is ashore, damn him. Get the Lower Lakes station at Chicago," Furman said.

Chicago answered almost at once.

"Give them this. Ten miles southeast by east off Kenosha. In distress. Cargo shifted. Water gaining. Captain Sheldon wants the *Watseka* to stand by."

The room swam down toward the biting waves below. He heard the water pound the deck outside the door. Then it came back toward the starless heaven. In his mind he could see them ashore. Sleepy-eyed girls snatching phone-exchange plugs. The harbor master routing the crew of the *Watseka* from their berths. The men, groggy with sleep, grabbing at their clothes; in a few minutes they would be pushing the old *Watseka*—she was almost as rickety as the *Minnetonkwa*—out into the lake.

Back to the storm they had only just now fled. Some would be raging and cursing, others silent. But they would come.

He stood a long time staring at the apparatus, the dials and coils and the bakelite panels. Awed at their power, he became appalled at what he had just caused to be done with them. There was death out here, he was bringing safe men to it. For what? The *Watseka* could do little, even if she could keep afloat herself. He wished he could get out of here, back to the decks where he belonged, but he knew he must wait until he knew, until he had something to say to the old man up there. Then it came upon him that the old boy up there was right, that he was acting out the inevitable, the tradition of the right thing to do.

They would be getting up steam there in Kenosha, they would be wrestling with stubborn old machinery while they jogged the sleep from their bodies. They would hate the *Minnetonkwa* and everybody on her, but they would do it.

The boy was talking to him now. "It's the *Watseka*. They started but they had to turn around in the harbor. Her steering jammed. They're fixing it."

Weak. Of course the junk would jam, it always did. Furman could see the frantic boys chasing the ropes down, shouting senseless obscenities as they tore their hands on the old wheels and pulleys. As they had done so many times themselves on the *Minnetonkwa*. He reached for the phone.

BENT double, Furman warily crept along the deck and until he bumped into him he did not hear the scared boy who was crying his name. He shook him, shook the words out of him.

"They want you on the lower deck," he got out of the boy at last.

Furman dragged him inside and rushed down the stairway. At the bottom was water. He felt it at his knee. It was coming in a torrent.

"We shouldn't have water here, not now, not yet. Where is it coming from?" he shouted at the boy.

"It's back there—they're waiting for you—next the purser's office," the boy said.

It was the passenger gangway cover. It was open six inches at least on one side.

"That was battened shut when we left, I did it myself," the carpenter told him.

"The whole ship's strained on this side, and the waves are forcing it more. Send a man to report it to Captain Sheldon. Get sledges! Quick!" Furman ordered.

The metal wouldn't budge. They pounded it first one way and then another. At last he signed for them to leave off and sent for tarpaulins. The water was forced, as from a fire hose and it swept them away. He shouted for blankets and stuffed them into the breaches. They held it back some.

"That will hold only as long as you keep at it. Keep some men at it until"—he hesitated—"until we reach Kenosha."

THEY were putting life preservers on the passengers. They were all huddled by the staircase in the long saloon. Only a dim bulb burned here and there. Cora was helping. Furman heard a woman sob. She cried out something and he saw her slump to the floor. Someone was getting her unconscious body into a preserver.

"Let her be that way, Roy, it's better," Cora said. She hesitated then, the same as he had, when he said the same words, "Until we get to Kenosha."

The purser was putting a life preserver on a dazed man. He struggled with a snarled strap, then ripped the thing off and flung it aside. He darted into a stateroom and got another. There were plenty of them.

"We're one passenger short, for God's sake count them for me—maybe it's me—there should be thirty-six," he shouted at Furman.

Furman counted, one, two,——seventeen, eighteen——there were the Constables, the kids' scared faces, the gray masks on the father and mother——twenty-two, twenty-three, Millard with his poker face——twenty-seven——Doc-

tor White who saw death so often, seeing it close again. Thirty-five. He counted again, faster now. They were putting life preservers on the Constable children, he saw the large stenciled letters JUVENILE. There were so many things to do—futile things—where was that thirty-sixth one? Why not let the storm and darkness have its way? He fought off a sensation of lethargy. He concentrated on the familiar faces. It was Edmonds who was not among them.

The man was sound asleep, full of Scotch of course. That was always his evening on the ship, cards and Scotch. Furman pounded on his door, shouted, rattling the knob. He lifted his foot and crashed it against the frail stateroom door. It smashed open. The fat man was curled almost double, his head touching the corner of the berth. Why couldn't he let him sleep on, Furman thought. Why rout him out of complacent unconsciousness, out of a warm bed, into the cold and terror of the night, into a little cockleshell of a boat, into the water the wind had maddened to a death fury?

He shook and pounded the fat shoulder. It moved and the whole figure moved with it and got awake a little.

"Why in hell are you waking me like this? We're not in, we're still out. You'd think the damn tub was sinking," Edmonds muttered, his eyes still closed.

"That's it, we are sinking! Get out fast! Bring your preserver!" Furman shouted. Then he bodily hustled the stupefied man onto the floor and wrestled him into a life preserver. Realization broke over Edmonds. He stiffened and took command of himself. Furman hurried him out to the cabin.

"I always knew this old relic would go down some night, but damned if I thought I'd be caught on her," he said.

FLASHLIGHTS lit up the foredeck, a red unnatural glare. On the bridge wing Captain Sheldon held his megaphone in one hand while he gripped to the rail with the other. His cap was gone, his features were clear in the bright light, like an actor ringed by a spotlight. The wind tossed his white hair. The only passengers on deck were Edmonds and the broker. The rest clung to the cabin, to whatever comfort its warmth and shelter from the battering wind afforded. Perhaps they hid from the reality of the night's terror.

Furman longed for action. A hundred years before, men fought with their brawn on this lake for their lives and ship. Against the wind and water, but now, there was little for muscles to do. They stood by their engines, their cogs, their pistons and cranks, wires and dynamos, hands idle on levers, waiting to see if machines or the storm would win.

Ballard, coat flopping, strode the deck, passing the standing deckhands, giving each a look as if he wanted to send them about some task but could think of none. He stopped before Furman.

"Are the boats in order—all of them?" he asked.

Furman did not resent the question. Not now. Instead he answered, "Inspected this morning; down three days ago per regulation, all of them, of course."

This was part of the routine, the show they were putting on tonight, with all their numbered scenes that must be played to the final curtain. Those boats could be of little use tonight. Ballard sensed his thought.

"They won't float long—still we ought to try. We're doing things for the inquiry now. I sat through one after we lost the *North Star*. Damned bunch of second guessers. They always are. Captain Christopher, as fine a captain as I ever sailed under, showed fine judgment that night, too. They said he should have done this, he should have done that. It's easy to be wise after a thing is over. How in hell did they know but what she'd sink anyway?"

He buttoned his coat and hunched his shoulders, then unbuttoned it, and let the wind take it again.

"I can see them now, as they'll be in a few days. Workman, the fat pup, sitting there looking wise. He's got the job because he worked in a shipyard once and is the brother of a politician. Bostwick, heckling the sick and tired crew like he did in the *Western World* wreck."

Ballard buttoned his coat again. "They'll say he ought to have beached her. I thought so for a while myself. There's good beach right along here. But we're twelve miles out. We ain't got the engines for it," he said.

"Dead or alive, whatever he does will be wrong. The big kick will be that he should have sent out a general distress signal as soon as the cargo got loose," Furman said. "Get a lot of ships out here when they can't do anything. Except get in trouble themselves."

CHAPTER IV

MINNETONKWA—R. I. P.

THE long night wore into a phantasy of unreality, stark, tragic, impossible drama. Furman was in the little pilot house, the receiver of the phone to his ear. He heard Carlson's voice from way down below replying.

"We can't pump the whole damned lake out of her. Not with these boilers. We're getting the last pound out of them. We're taking a foot an hour."

He turned and saw the captain standing beside the wheelsman, straining his eyes through the wet pane, dead pipe clenched in his teeth. He relayed the engineer's message on to Sheldon.

He saw the old man reach for the telegraph and set it at STOP. Furman heard the engines die.

"Drop anchor—put all the steam into the pumps. We ought to last until the storm dies—at least until daybreak," he heard the old man say.

Furman went to the bridge wing and waited until he thought she had lost most of her way. Then he gave the order that dropped both anchors from the bow. The *Minnetonkwa* became a tossed thing on the lake. The anchors held.

FURMAN stood in the stokehold that was dark as death except when the fire doors opened. Then the red glare lit the men's faces, black and strained. The water swished about the floor as the men struggled with heaped shovels to the furnaces. As he watched, one of them lost his footing and went flying to the ship's side. Sodden, battered, he rose and went back for more coal. Furman stood helpless and watched the water creep up the sides of the hold. Soon the men worked in it at their knees and then only a little later it reached their thighs. As the ship swayed he could hear the cargo still hitting her side, only a few feet from where he stood.

He watched Carlson reach into the water and bring up a cupped handful, look at it, then let it drip from his hand. He heard him say, "That says good-bye *Minnetonkwa*. Good old ship, even if she did have the damndest engines I ever ran."

"What do you mean?" Furman asked.

"Ashes. Ashes from the firehold. The water's washing them from there. The pumps will get them in a minute; they can't handle them, they'll clog," Carlson said.

Furman waited, waited, while his thoughts became dull. He heard the pumps pound as the clinkers reached them. They stopped.

The men all stood and watched the water creep up to the fires. There was a hiss, the room filled with steam and they were out. The black arrow on the white dial stayed steady a bit, wavered, then dropped to zero.

"That's all, boys. Get out!" Carlson shouted. The men scrambled up the swaying stairway. Furman followed.

He was in the little wireless room again. The boy was calmer now. He looked at Furman but said nothing. Furman told him to send out a general distress signal. He turned and worked his dial.

Furman stood at the rail looking into the darkness to where the shore should be. Cora was with him. There were others there, too, but who they were he did not know. The emergency batteries lit a few stand lights on the top deck, flashlights waved in the blackness. They were sending rockets into the sky, but there were no answering signals. The boats were ready for the order. They were too little to live more than a moment after launching, Furman knew. He

The stokehold was dark as death except when the fire doors opened.

fought against his growing despair.

The *Minnetonkwa* was already a part of the cold still world down there. He wanted to say something to the girl huddled beside him, but the words stuck in his throat.

Cora said, "In a way, I've always seemed to know it would end like this, Roy. But I've lived the life I wanted, the life I was made for. I've been happy all the long years on this old steamship, with Dad and the rest—and you. I guess we have belonged to that lost generation, the one that they are always talking about. Maybe we're just a lot of people that the world passed by, riding in airplanes and streamlined trains while we dreamed life away on the *Minnetonkwa*."

"Got a cigarette, Mr. Furman?" It was the lad from the wireless room.

Furman reached beneath his oilskins and got one out and handed it over. The flame from the boy's cupped hand lit his face, showed the strained features he was trying to control. He dragged hard on the damp cigarette and the wind blew sparks from its red glow. For less than a minute the boy smoked. Then his hand grabbed Furman's arm; the nails pierced through the thick oilskins.

"My God, Mr. Furman, this is my last smoke, my very last smoke, *last smoke, last smoke*," he was crying. "I don't want to die, I'm only beginning." He kept on hollering, "Just beginning . . . . just beginning . . . . last smoke . . . . last smoke," over and over.

Furman had watched the events of the night unfold, grim acts in a pantomime of fate, the ship's people like gray actors, shadowy and unreal, performing as though cued from a prompt book. The boy's frenzy shocked them all into actuality. This was unrehearsed, improvisation. The black figures about him started to mill, elbow him; he heard curses, prayers. He pulled Cora closer, shielded her. A big deckhand crushed between them. He was shouting, "Let me set just one of my damn fool feet on that sand over there and see if I ever ship again, not for a thousand a month and grub."

Furman saw the captain come out on the bridge wing, Ballard with him. His voice through the megaphone was clear, even above all the clamor.

"Don't throw our chances away that way!" he shouted. Then he stood silent while his arm rose to point shoreward.

Furman looked into the wall of black. He saw a little pinpoint of light. As he watched he saw another, then another, far apart—a whole line of them.

"The Coast Guard's coming," he told Cora. "A lot of them. They must be coming from all the stations."

"But we're ten miles out. They can't get here the way it is," she answered.

"They are doing the impossible again. God, if only the wind would let up, just a little—" He stopped. She knew as well as he that even if some of the boats reached the *Minnetonkwa*, unless the storm showed some mercy it would be practically impossible for a single soul to be transferred to them.

From the boat deck the *Minnetonkwa* was as something from the supernatural. The searchlight reached a cold white beam into the sky, turning always. The red flares turned the scene into a chill inferno, showing the men like gnomes. Each wave struck the sinking vessel to break into a million russet rubies that joined the rain drenching the decks.

FROM the bridge the lights of the Coast Guard boats were growing larger. Cora had followed Furman up there; they found their way to where Ballard stood on the bridge wing, staring at them.

"All good men, those fellows. Never have got that far out if they weren't. They've got to plan every foot of that water ahead, as far as their little searchlight shows. Got to meet every wave just so. I know."

"Yes, and if one of those engines just misses a beat, they'll swamp," added Furman.

"Every split second is its own risk," Ballard said. "They're fools to try it, but all sailors are fools, especially freshwater ones."

Furman could see the men in those little boats, balancing their oars, ready if their engines should stall. For long minutes the three of them watched.

Then the *Minnetonkwa's* searchlight found the first one and looked down into it as it tossed and swerved. It reached the ship's side and they could see the crew, pulling desperately on their oars to balance it in the mad water.

The officer in the rear stood up and shouted. "Send us down a line!"

"Get a line over," Ballard ordered. "Let Peterson handle it."

The big seaman made a hard throw; it missed, landing across the little boat's stern. The craft started to spin, its crew making frantic efforts to hold it; its engine hammered irregularly, almost stopping.

"Cut that line! Quick! For God's sake, Peterson!" Ballard shouted. "It's in her propeller." An axe flashed across the taut line.

In the boat they were snatching at the rope, freeing it.

The *Minnetonkwa* was a dead thing on the lake's surface. The lower decks awash, the waves heavy and brutal could just jolt her dead weight a bit. From the boat deck they watched the surfmen trying to reach the ship's side. All the shore boats were off a bit from her.

The powerful lake was playing with their hopes. There would be a little lull, the boats would warily approach, and just as success seemed possible the storm would break forth with renewed fury, sending them crashing almost against her. Then, engines roaring, oars bending, they fought for safe distance from her.

In the pilot house, Furman looked at Captain Sheldon. The old man's face glistened with spray; showed nothing of the tragedy that was behind it.

"We haven't much time left now, Roy. They can't get to us, we'll have to try to get to them. Launch the boats," he said.

FURMAN clung to the davit and watched the boat jerk down the side. From the bridge they were playing the searchlight on it, turning everything ghastly white. It swung dangerously as the *Minnetonkwa* rolled. A dazed man in it was letting his arm hang over the side. Furman shouted too late; the boat hit the ship's side and he heard a shriek. He could see the man's face plainly. He was looking at his arm, surprised that it still dangled there. The side of the boat was stove. As she hit, the water came in her. The searchlight made a white-lighted disk about her. In it the men could be seen rowing and bailing as they fought to get away from the doomed ship. As she swamped, the guardsmen were about her pulling the spilled, struggling figures from the water.

Furman moved to the next boat in line. Its crew were in their places; Ballard was getting the passengers in.

He said, "Did they get all of the boat's load out of the water?"

Furman answered, "I didn't wait. The waves were scattering them bad. I hope so."

"If daylight comes soon they can get even those that drift. Anyway, the life preservers will hold them," Ballard said. He was fighting an old lady who clung to a ventilator funnel. She clung to the solid ship and screamed. "Don't be a damn fool, lady," he shouted into her ear. "This ship goes down any minute. Holler like that when you hit the water. They'll get you."

The story of the first boat was the story of them all. They hit the water, got a little way from the ship, then swamped. The surfmen pounced upon them as they foundered, gathered as many as possible before the storm swept them away.

Captain Sheldon, alone on the bridge wing, worked the searchlight. He would sweep the waters, pick up a floating survivor, then shout directions to the boats below.

The screams from the water below came louder than the beating of the wind and the roar of the lifeboats' engines. They tore into Furman's very soul. His whole life seemed to be this long night. All that had gone before it was faded. Stupefied, he automatically loaded and lowered the boats until none was left.

Only the rafts remained now. They were trying to persuade the captain to go. He refused to leave, continued to

work his searchlight, shout his orders. Cora sobbed. Furman saw her face and read the thought behind it.

"Can't you be a good girl even at a time like this and not bother your old man when he is busy? I'm not a 'go-down-with-the-ship hero.' There is still some time," Sheldon said, giving her shoulder a little pat. "You and Roy get a raft loose, I'll be there in a minute or two. Lash yourselves—they get sucked under."

The mate, the purser, and a few of the crew were still on her. The raft was, as usual, made of boards, fastened to metal barrels. They stowed themselves on it. Cora was silent except when they could hear a little sob from her.

"If we had any sense we would have broken open the bar and got a quart or two," the purser said.

"If we had any sense, Charlie, we wouldn't be here at all. We would be sleeping warm in a bed right now, at least until we had to get up and milk the cows," Ballard replied.

THE blackness at last was changing into a murky gray. Some place behind the fog of clouds a red sun was trying to blaze through. The flares grew pale, the white of the ship's superstructure was becoming clear. Cora sobbed again softly. Captain Sheldon dropped his megaphone and started back toward the raft. As if she had waited for this moment, the *Minnetonkwa,* the water swamping her upper decks, raised her prow toward the sky. In a split second Furman saw the old man catapulted across the deck. He pressed Cora's face to him lest she see. The old man's head hit a stanchion and he lay still. Almost at the same moment, while the sight of the old man lying there burned into his brain, he felt the cold water about his body and he knew that the ship had slid from beneath the raft. He ached to his very bones from the dead cold. He had never thought there could be such cold. He found that the raft had not been sucked under. At least hardly at all. The old *Minnetonkwa* had just seemed to slink from under it, leaving it floating.

One arm still clinging to the boards of the raft, the other pressing Cora's still face to his breast, he looked about him in the growing daylight.

He saw life preservers all around him. The Coast Guard boats were gathering them in. In the boats he saw the surfmen trying artificial respiration on some of the survivors.

On the raft, in comparative safety, they would have to wait a long time for their turn.

Beautiful as a dream—deadly as a serpent—they called her—

"DAUGHTER OF MURDER!"

Guarded by fierce, bloodthirsty dogs—surrounded by a No Man's Land of forest where no stranger dared enter—a strange, malformed pair of mute servants her only friends, she waited for the day when a man would come to bring her love and—Death! Russell Gray spins a fascinating tale of sinister crime, in this amazing complete novel. And there are nine more spine-tingling stories of weird menace by such authors as David Crewe, James A. Kirch and many more in the all-star October issue, on sale at your newsstand Now!

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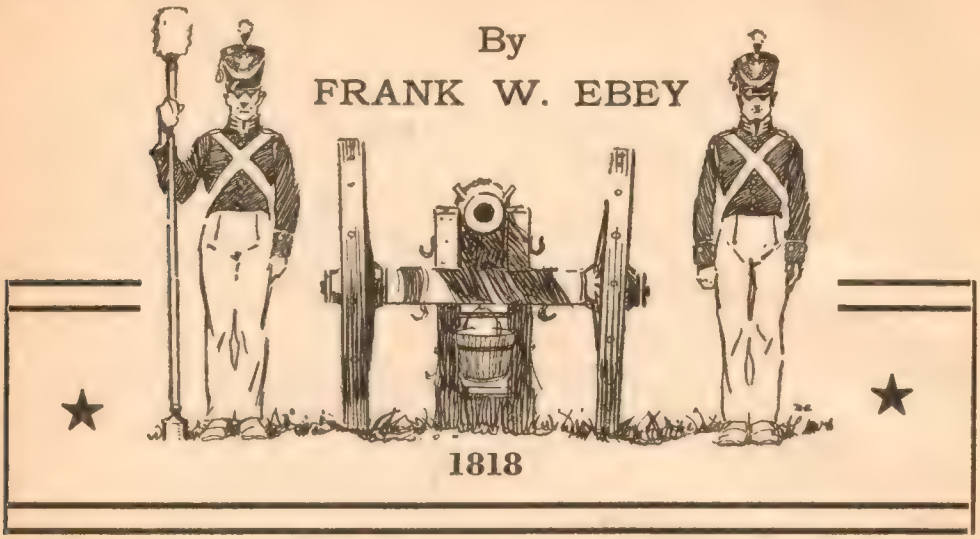
ORGANIZATION DAY

By
FRANK W. EBEY



ILLUSTRATED BY I. B. HAZELTON

PRIVATE BOB MURRAY sauntered from "B" Battery's mess hall, deliberately and belligerently. He blinked at the bright morning sun and strode on through the patio of barracks. At the archway framing the entrance to the patio he paused and looked up at the freshly painted lettering on the arch. He twisted his freckle-peppered face into a scowl.

"Don't get excited on your first hitch, Red," a voice spoke behind him.

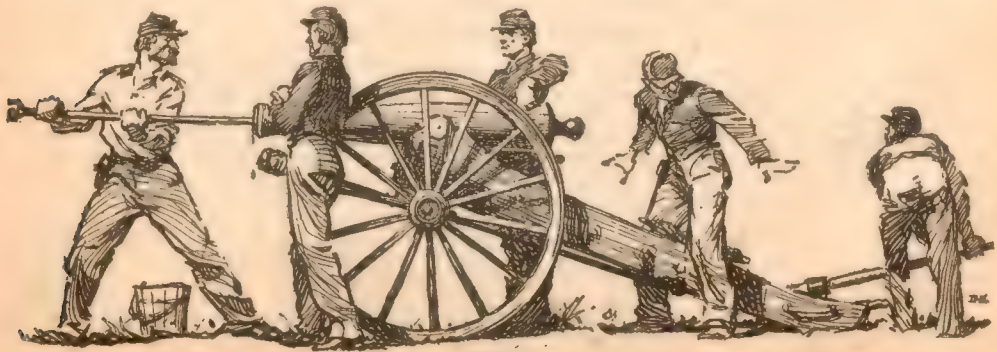
Murray turned his chunky frame around to face the speaker. He looked up at the taller man.

"What's it to you, Mac?" he demanded. "If this ain't a hell of an Organization Day, I never saw one. They can paint up the sign and talk about what a swell outfit this is—but they call off the beer bust. I don't see anything swell about these recruit-riding corporals or sergeants or the outfit or anything. Signs ain't fun, but a beer bust now—"

Private Joseph McLane laid a big hand on Murray's shoulder.

"What do you know about Organization Day, soldier? You never saw one before."

"You neither, Joe," Murray snapped. "And you ain't seein' one now. You're seein' an anti-sabotage alert instead and you're liable to spend all Sunday morn-



1818—Seminole War
1847—Buena Vista
1847—Chapultepec
1861—Bull Run
1864—Cold Harbor

1865—Richmond
1900—Boxer Rebellion
1901—Philippines
1918—Château Thierry
1918—Belleau Wood

1941—

ing hanging around here on call. Beautiful Hawaii—nuts!"

"We'll have one later when things calm down, Red," McLane soothed in the drawl of West Texas. "After all, it is a pretty sign."

"Organized December 7, 1817," Murray read from the sign. "In One Hundred and Twenty-four years this battery has never lost a gun." He paused. "Hell, that ain't so much. A gun's a pretty hard thing to lose."

"That means lost in action, Red," McLane corrected. "Maybe they always kept the guns near the chow so the guys would fight better."

"Maybe," Red agreed. "Or something like that. I'll bet they never had tractor-drawn 155's. Not in those days."

"Maybe they had recruits like us draw 'em by hand," McLane added.

"I wouldn't put it past 'em," Red Murray declared bitterly. "No beer bust. Hardboiled noncoms. I sure don't care whether or not they lose their old guns. They ain't mine. I'll bet it wasn't like that in the old days."

IT HADN'T been like that in the old days, days that extended back a hundred and four years before either Murray or McLane existed. Both were too young in the service to realize the meaning of the flaming red battle streamers down at Headquarters. Seminole War, Buena Vista, Chapultepec, Bull Run, Cold Harbor, Richmond, Boxer Rebellion, Philippines, Château Thierry, Belleau Wood were just names in history to them.

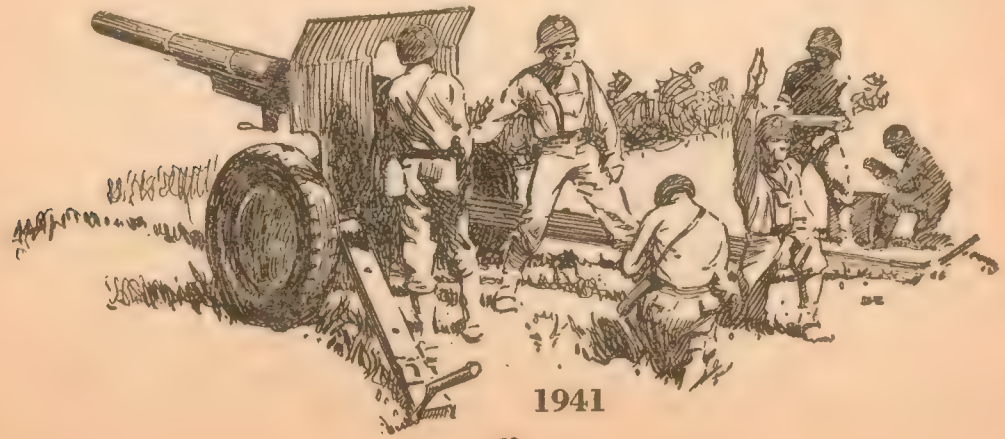
Those two had never seen the regimental history that told of thousands of weary miles covered—under fire, through jungle, mountain, and desert country. Weary miles in tropical heat and whistling northers as gaunt men and gaunter horses struggled and died to keep the battery's record clean. Neither knew, even, that from 1907 when the battery became a part of Coast Artillery, until 1917, that the outfit was a mine battery with not even a one pounder to lose.

"Let's go down to the PX and sweat out the beer bar opening," McLane urged. "We can get that far away, anyhow."

The recruits walked most of the four blocks to the Post Exchange in gloomy silence. Suddenly Red Murray kicked viciously at a small pebble.

"I'd been looking forward to that beer bust."

"Aw, come off it," McLane urged. "You gotta admit, Red, it's mighty pret-



1941

ty here. Look at the pretty patterns the sun makes coming through those palms."

"I don't want none of it," Murray declared with emphasis. "Nothing but seeing Diamond Head from the west end of that old Eastbound transport." He made a sweeping gesture with his left arm. "You can take Pearl Harbor and this place and Hickam Field. And especially they can take those guns they never lost. Just give me Texas—"

The ground trembled with terrific concussion. Seconds later a thunderous explosion split the air. Red Murray shied.

"What's that?"

"Navy blasting out in the channel. They're always—"

"No, it ain't." Red clutched McLane's arm and pointed skyward in the direction of Pearl Harbor. "Look, Joe, maneuvers again."

High over Pearl a string of planes were diving, head to tail, in an arcing *U*. In bare seconds the first explosion seemed to breed more. The rattle of machine guns joined in. And then, rising above those noises, the unmistakable bark of anti-aircraft guns joined in the chorus. A sheet of yellow flame shot high above Pearl, followed by dark, oily rolling smoke!

To their right other explosions sounded. The ground shook constantly now. They looked across to Hickam Field. Smoke was rising from the runways.

The first sergeant, leading slightly, poured twenty bullets toward the little ship. . .

High above Hickam and Pearl were dark, cloud-like puffs of anti-aircraft bursts.

"This ain't maneuvers!" Red Murray cried. His voice was drowned, as close by, the post siren commenced wailing in a high, frantic shriek.

McLane grabbed his arm and pointed to the asphalted road. The asphalt was exploding in tiny, vicious flecks. Just overhead a machine gun chattered.

Red Murray looked up at a monoplane fighter, not fifty feet off the ground. On its fuselage was painted a red circle.

"Good God, it's the Japs!" McLane shouted.

"War, the yellow bellies!" Murray screamed back as the pair broke for their barracks.

As they raced for their own barracks, soldiers commenced boiling from barracks on both sides of the street. Not two minutes had passed since the first concussion from Pearl Harbor. But now scores of men carrying rifles and automatic rifles were appearing. Just ahead of them a tall first sergeant skidded to a halt, came to one knee, and raised his automatic rifle.

Murray and McLane stopped to watch him. A fighter buzzed across from the channel. Its machine guns were flaming and it was so low that the pilot was plainly visible. The first sergeant, leading slightly, poured twenty bullets toward the little ship. Suddenly the pilot slumped forward. The fighter whipped over on its back and plunged through a fringe of palms on the back road.

Both turned to follow the plane down. Over Hickam and Pearl and Kamehameha the sky was black with anti-aircraft bursts. It was a magnificent display put on by surprised and dying men—fighting back. Nine bombers, not ten thousand feet up, where wheeling over Hickam in perfect formation.

THE RECRUITS stood and watched, hypnotized by the ferocity of the barrage. Then a shell, rammed home by a colored mess boy on a destroyer, who died before the time of flight expired, burst just ahead of the left wing bomber.

. . . and suddenly the pilot slumped forward and the fighter whipped over on its back.

It disintegrated into angry yellow flame. Two more exploded like firecrackers on a string and then there were six bombers hightailing it, formation not so good.

Red Murray grabbed McLane's arm.

"Let's get on to the outfit!"

They started running again. The fighters were still buzzing in low overhead. Murray was only faintly aware that the little flecks of concrete and asphalt exploding were caused by machine gun bullets.

Ahead of them and across the street a redheaded second lieutenant was running, pistol holster banging against his thigh. He was still buttoning his shirt. The lieutenant was running and then he wasn't. He just fell forward and skidded along on his face.

Murray pounded into "B" Battery's patio, McLane behind him. Men were still coming out of barracks, some clad only in shorts, but all with tin hats and rifles or auto-rifles. In the center of the patio the supply sergeant's helper was breaking open boxes of ammunition.

"Get your helmets and rifles!" the top kick shouted.

As Murray came back from the rifle rack, the captain came running into the patio. He stopped and commenced talking rapidly, pantingly to the first sergeant.

"Get the machine guns set up back of barracks," Red Murray heard him say. "Fan 'em out. We don't want to lose everybody by one lucky hit."

It dawned on the recruit that the captain and first sergeant weren't worried. They were acting cool and unafraid. And he realized with a start that he wasn't

scared either. He looked around. None of the outfit was showing any sign of fear or panic. They were just mad.

A hand pushed his shoulder. It was the first sergeant.

"Go help get those guns out of the supply room, youngster," he said gruffly.

In the supply room, Murray grabbed one of the battery's four machine guns and started for the door. Somebody grabbed him, but Murray twisted him off.

"I'm an expert gunner," he said.

"O.K., kid. Get out there and give 'em hell!"

The sergeant flung an arm towards the rear door and Murray saw that the arm was bleeding.

He cradled the gun in his arm and ran out onto the grassy plot behind barracks.

Three men were already setting up an anti-aircraft tripod and adapter. One of them slumped over, moaning a little bit. The other two helped secure the gun in place. Red held on to the gun. Somebody slapped an ammunition box into place. Another was filling the water jacket. Red pulled the belt tag through, slammed the bolt back twice.

He leaned on the back rest, pivoted on his heels and slammed a burst skyward at bombers overhead. A corporal slapped him on the back.

"Come off wasting ammunition on that high stuff!"

A pair of fighters, returning from a strafing expedition down the hanger line at Hickam, approached. They were coming out higher than they went in.

"B" Battery's four machine guns went into a simultaneous chattering challenge. Murray laid a burst just ahead of the leading plane. He saw his tracer's smoking under the Jap's belly and raised. Then somebody's burst, not his, caught the leading Jap. The plane nosed up, yellow smoke trailing, rolled over and plunged into the glistening waters of Pearl Harbor Channel. The other continued.

A cheer rose from the battery. High over them a flight of bombers were going out, chased by AA bursts. One burst caught the leader of the flight, who fell smoking.

RED MURRAY pushed his tin hat back and wiped the sweat from his face. He lit a cigarette, dully conscious that no more planes were in the air and there were no more AA bursts. The silence of this lull was almost unreal. Here and there some nervous finger relieved the temporary monotony and let a rifle or machine gun go.

"They'll be back with more!" a sergeant shouted. "Take it easy, gang!"

The gun sergeants and ammunition sergeant were rounding up their men from the group spread around the barracks area. Murray started to move off with the number three gun crew. The section leader motioned him back.

"We're going to our war position as soon as we get the guns limbered and the ammunition loaded. You stay here with the machine guns till then."

A staff sergeant from headquarters ran down the alley just beyond them, right hand raised and thumb up.

"Never got a woman or kid on the post!" he shouted triumphantly. "We got 'em all safe in bomb proofs!"

A spontaneous cheer tore itself from the throats of the men at the machine guns and the men joining gun and ammunition sections. Red Murray found himself cheering and then noticed that tears were in his eyes.

This was a sort of good outfit, after all. Maybe he'd misjudged some of these hardboiled corporals and sergeants. They seemed as glad about the women and kids as he did. Funny. None of 'em had ever mentioned it before.

"Guns stand by," the captain bellowed. "Here they come!"

In the channel, and outside the channel, from Ahua Point to Diamond Head, destroyers greeted this second wave with a flaming barrage that picked off the right wing man of this leading flight.

A cheer rose from the machine gunners, froze, and turned to a raging wail as the flight let go a stick of bombs. Murray watched them coming down overhead, glistening death in the sun, with hypnotic fascination, followed them until they burst square on Hickam's gleaming white barracks.

"Commence firing!" the captain's

strident yell cut through the uproar.

Three fighters were coming in low. Their machine guns started to flash and the bullets began zinging by. Over by the alley a demolition bomb came in with a *whoomph*. Three of "B" Battery's guns were hosing the fighters with tracers. Number one gun was adjusting a stoppage. The right plane faltered, the pilot slumped forward, and the ship dived in at the guns. It landed in the alley, the fuselage breaking in two. The other planes went on into Hickam.

Somebody yelled: "They're strafing our gun park!"

Murray looked in the direction of the gun park, half a mile up the beach line. Fighters were coming in, diving, pulling out. Murray prayed for more planes to come his way. They couldn't do that to "B" Battery.

Fighters kept buzzing low over the post, most of them out of reach of "B" Battery and the bombers kept coming in and the deafening noise became like part of a drill. Murray fired with the other gunners at anything within range. When they weren't coming over, he stood alert. Then things quieted down much as they had before and there was another lull in enemy activity.

There was no lull for "B" Battery. Now the tractors were rumbling up the alley pulling the 155's. Ahead of them were the powder and ammunition trucks.

The cooks dragged a boiler out of the kitchen and loaded it onto a truck backed to the kitchen door.

Murray heard the mess sergeant remark to the captain, "They shot up one stove, sir, but I can finish this slum in the field. We got plenty of bread."

As he aided in lashing his gun and tripod on the barrel of number three gun, Murray noticed blood smeared on the trail.

"Anybody hurt at the gun park?" he asked anxiously.

"What do you think?" the gun commander growled.

Something tugged inside Red Murray. Already some of the guys in the outfit had fought and bled and maybe died just to get these guns up to barracks. A pride and a hate swelled in his heart.

Up ahead, the battery commander swung his arm down and forward and the column of trucks and guns started down the alley, swung over to the barracks street and pointed down the tree-shaded officers' line, parallel to Pearl Harbor Channel.

"We going to go across the channel on that barge like always?" a corporal shouted to a gun sergeant.

"Sure," the sergeant screamed back. "How the hell else we going to get across?"

There was a halt under the trees at the end of the officers' line. The leading trucks turned to the head of the dock that jutted out into the channel.

The four machine guns were dismounted and set up at the head of the dock.

OUT in the channel, destroyers and cruisers were racing full speed ahead for the sea. Then the ships started blasting again. A rebel yell split the air.

"Yowie. Here come those yellow bellies again!"

The bombers were higher this time and the AA fire was more intense. Shrapnel rained on the dock and splashed the channel waters. A fighter buzzed low and strafed the dock. He zoomed up, tracers from "B" Battery's guns tearing into his belly. He burst into flames.

Three dive bombers started in on a cruiser passing the dock. AA fire drove them up and they let go their load too late. Three bombs thumped down with a leg-burning blast, just to the right of the trees where most of the battery was parked.

The blast drove Red Murray head down onto the concrete dock. He stood up, eyes swimming, and looked for his gun. It was behind him. The tripod was tipped over and the water jacket was torn and twisted.

Deprived of his weapon, Murray turned and ran for the trucks to get a rifle. He stumbled and sprawled.

"What's your hurry, recruit?" a weak voice hailed him.

Red looked up. Propped against an algeroba tree, his left trouser leg soaked with blood, was Joe McLane.

"You hurt, Joe?"

"Not much," McLane lied. "Some organization day, hey kid? Maybe this is the day we lose our guns, huh?"

Murray dragged himself to his feet.

"We ain't never going to lose those guns!" he screamed at his friend on the ground. "They're ours. If guys our size couldn't get 'em in a hundred and twenty-four years, no yellow bellies are going to get 'em in one day!"

"Make way!" a voice cried behind him.

Murray jumped. A medical man and a private were carrying a wounded driver over to a tree.

Murray looked at the truck. Little yellow flames were eating into the wood back of the cab and climbing along the tarpaulin cover.

"That ammunition truck's on fire!" a sergeant yelled. "If that powder—"

Murray made a dive for the truck, pushed open the twisted door and stomped on the starter. The motor turned with maddening slowness and then caught.

"If this gets our guns—" he muttered to himself, throwing in the clutch.

The truck lurched forward, almost choked, as Murray gunned her, and moved forward onto the dock. A biting burn bit at his shoulder.

Suddenly the whole cab blazed up. Murray let go the wheel, started to jump. He grabbed the wheel again, looked back. The guns were still too close—guns that hadn't been lost in a—

For the first time that day, cold, clammy fear drove straight to Red Murray's heart. He wanted to jump—but those guns back there. . . . . The truck rolled along the dock, halfway to the water now. His entire body writhed in pain. He tried to beat out a spark on his left shoulder. The truck bumped over a pile of rope and the wheel wrenched savagely. He put his right hand back on the hot wheel, wrenched back and jumped from the truck. It rolled on, the flames roaring across the entire tarpaulin and wood sides.

Murray landed on his hands and knees, winced as the rough concrete rubbed his palms raw, went to his feet and raced for the land end of the dock. He ducked as a torpedo plane roared down over the dock, straightened and pointed for the channel—

The torpedo plane wasn't headed for Red Murray. Its target was a square sterned cruiser steaming past the dock. The plane roared on. Brown fingers were clutching the torpedo release.

And then the brown fingers were torn from the release in a blast from underneath that also disintegrated the plane. Four hundred stacked charges of powder and a truck, rolling off the end of the dock, exploded in that instant in a blast that rolled the passing cruiser. It knocked Murray, senseless, to the dock.

HE OPENED his eyes under palm trees. A khaki arm with a Red Cross brassard pushed him back as he tried to rise.

"You ain't hurt bad," the owner of the voice said, "but you gotta be hospitalized."

Red turned his head. He realized he was on a stretcher. A bandaged sailor lay next to him.

"This guy drove a truck of powder under a torpedo plane and blew it up just before that plane got a cruiser," the medical man told the sailor.

"Our guns get across?" Red inquired.

"Yeah," grunted the medico. "They wasn't hurt."

"Atta boy, army," the sailor said. "We'll give you a medal."

Red Murray closed his eyes and breathed deeply. Then he opened his eyes and sat up.

"Listen, sailor," he said huskily, proudly. "You're welcome to that cruiser. But let me tell you what I did save. Our guns! We haven't lost a gun in a hundred and twenty-four years. We ain't losing any now. Today's the organization day for the best outfit in the whole world. I'm sweating out next organization day in Tokio. You come along and we'll give you some beer!"

Private Red Murray rested. Rested, as perhaps the ghosts of the gunners who had preceded him down the long years must have rested, as a fresh battle streamer joined the long line from Chapultepec to Château Thierry.

Pearl Harbor.

ILLUSTRATED
BY
HAMILTON GREENE

Tokura covered them with his Luger, waited, his face impassive.

INDIA PASSAGE

By HAL G. EVARTS

ROSS walked at the head of the caravan, his shoulders hunched in dejection. Occasionally he raised his eyes, let them rove along the gorge and up the towering cliffs. And each time he felt the same impotent rage stirring, as though he had a personal feud with the granite itself. He wanted to shake his fist at the formation, curse it. He wanted mental release, in any childish way, just as he wanted physical release from the great savage slot of Lishu Gorge, to equalize the pressure both within him and without. For Ross had failed. He knew it, and the six men plodding behind knew it. He had let them down.

"And you're supposed to know this country," a voice grated from the rear.

Ross was a small man, a humble man he would have claimed, but now his was the humility of shame. He did know the country—this unexplored borderland between Chinese Sikong and British Assam—perhaps better than anyone else, but that wasn't enough. Not enough for Ed Mack, or the Chungking War Ministry.

"'Animal' Ross," the voice sneered. "I ask for an expert and they give me a zoo hunter!"

Ross kept his face forward, picking a path through the maze of bracken and boulders that spilled over the bottoms. At that moment the burden of defeat

rode hard. Ed Mack was right. Guide, animal collector, tracker—these things Ross might be, but he was no technician. And this was no job for amateurs like himself.

"You said you could locate a passage through the top rims onto the plateau," the engineer charged. "A crack, a worm hole, anything dynamite can blast out. That was your promise." He broke off, and Ross sensed the bitterness working in him like a poison. "The Japs may have cut the Burma Road already!"

Ross's feet ceased moving. The lead mule slowed to a stop, stilling the jingle of his collar bells, and the other animals piled up behind in a tiny alpine meadow. He was conscious of jouncing panniers and the river's boom below. Every noise was magnified.

THROUGH a pair of Zeiss lenses Ross examined the canyonside, which tilted back thousands of feet to the upper rims, and there rose sheer to the wedge of sky in a final snow-pitted wall. He had been over the base, every section of it, for miles, without finding any hint of a break-through.

"Mack—" he said. Ranged behind Mack were the four Chinese surveyors, sullen and restless, and the fat Tibetan wrangler, Nawshi. All of them against him, he knew, after the weeks of futile heartbreaking labor. "Mack, I'm not quitting yet."

Mack, a big impatient man with reddish hair, shifted his bulk. Everything about him was big. He built big lasting things, such as bridges and dams and highways, that people would be using a hundred years from now. He was the kind of American that foreign governments hire to perform their miracles. "Every day counts," he said. "Every hour! I'm packing out to get another guide. Somebody who can deliver."

Ross focused his faded gray eyes on the younger man's face. In the wear and strain that had gone before, Ross had come to regard Mack as hard and stubborn as the mountains they were trying to pierce. And now that the showdown had come he was self-conscious about his idea. It was far-fetched, to say the least, and Mack was a practical realist who expected results.

"Look," Ross said. He stooped and plucked a fluff of white impaled on a thorn bush and cupped it in his palm for Mack's inspection. "*Hodgsoni* wool," he said, hoping he sounded scientific.

Mack ignored the specimen. "So what?"

Ross shaped a taut smile. He realized that explanations were useless. Mack simply wouldn't comprehend. He backed toward his mule and slipped his .33 from the saddle boot. The four Chinese watched with wooden expressions while he tested the action. Mack waited, mystified, making fists of his freckled hands.

"*Ovis ammon hodgsoni*," Ross offered. "Argali. One of the rarest big horn sheep in Asia."

"Sheep!" Mack exploded. "What do you think this is—a safari?"

Ross regarded him deliberately. From his breast pocket he drew out papers and a sack of tobacco, rolled a cigarette. Thoughtfully he rummaged through his clothes for a match. "Nawshi," he called.

The Tibetan, a suet-complected buck with pouchy eyes, swaggered up. "Yes, master," he said. He fumbled in the pouch under his *chuba*, produced a flint, steel and tinder.

Ross struck a light and took a deep puff. Through the smoke he eyed Nawshi, sized him up. The wrangler was nervous, on edge for some reason; his coral ear rings trembled noticeably. But he would do better than the others, Ross decided. Disregarding Mack, he handed the Tibetan his Winchester and a box of cartridges. "Follow me, Nawshi," he instructed. "The rest of you stay here." Mack swore. Mack was blocking his view as he pivoted to get past. Otherwise Ross might have seen the flash of sunlight in the rock jumble beyond much sooner. As it was he took several steps with Nawshi before he finally did notice. From years of habit he dropped to his stomach. He lay flat while a frown gathered on his forehead.

The object that attracted his attention was not, he was sure, the white of a ram's summer coat. A closer resemblance was the glint of oiled metal.

It was unlikely, of course. No villages, lamasery or solitary *yurt* lay within a hundred mile radius. What would anyone else be doing in Lishu Gorge anyhow? It was absurd. And yet—

"Nawshi!" he hissed, stretching back his arm. "The rifle, quick!"

A FILE of riders trotted into his line of vision not more than fifty yards away. Ross moistened his lips and counted, half believing, half hoping, that they would fade out and disappear. There were twelve in all, each with a carbine in the crook of his elbow and an aiming fork on his back, and they mounted stocky mountain ponies. But not until they charged was he able to react.

Then he jerked around to face the muzzle of his own gun. Nawshi's teeth showed in a yellow grin. "Yes, master," the Tibetan said.

Ross didn't get it at first.

"Yes, master," Nawshi repeated, and curved his finger inside the trigger guard. His mission jargon made little sense, but his eyes did. They shone with a frozen unemotional hate. It was a look Ross had seen in the eyes of jungle cats.

Ross had a one track mind. He postponed his amazement and confined himself to immediate externals. He had nothing, not even a skinning knife; Nawshi had a loaded game rifle trained on his chest. He rose and lifted his hands in the air as the horsemen swarmed in and surrounded the meadow.

It was swift, efficient and incredibly silent. The only resistance came from a Chinese who attempted to hide. One of the riders overran him, lopped his head half from his body with a single sword stroke. The three remaining Chinese were tied, hands behind their backs, and shoved face down on the grass. Ross watched the whole scene as though in a trance. When it was over he remembered that not one shot had been fired.

Then Nawshi was in front of him, searching his clothes. He took everything but his makings. When he was satisfied, the Tibetan jabbed him with the rifle. There was a click as he cocked the hammer.

Ross stiffened. He didn't understand what was happening yet, not at all. But in his business a man got used to violence and death, without being sentimental, so he wasn't afraid to die if he had to, he told himself. Not really. The worst part was leaving an important job of work undone. Probably the one job he could do—his bit—to help get on with the war.

Somebody lashed his wrists with yak rope and prodded him. He stumbled forward, his mind absorbing details. These were Cham men: he knew from the braided hair, the thick cloaks, the way they picketed their horses. But they were no cut-throat bandits. They were too well oragnized.

Ed Mack stood alone, pale and defiant, in the center of a ring of them. His hands weren't bound, but there was a bruise on one cheek and a gun against his ribs. He glared straight at Ross.

"Good-morning, please," a voice said in precise English.

Ross managed not to start. He was beyond surprise actually. The whole business was so strange that he could maintain a numb sort of control. He squinted into the shadows, and kept on squinting, long after it was necessary.

A dark stubby officer in field uniform strode toward them. Apparently he had kept out of sight until the ambush was complete, then ridden in. And suddenly, Ross did understand—all of it. The officer was Japanese.

He was sleek, with glowing skin and hair plastered close to his skull. Blandly he said, "I am Captain Tokura, Japanese Army Engineer Corps," as though he were introducing friends on the Tokyo Ginza. And after a pause, "Cal Tech, '32."

He glanced first at Mack, then at Ross, politely appraising. "About you gentlemen I know already. Nawshi has kept me informed of your whereabouts and plans. In fact," Tokura declared, with a suggestion of a bow, "he arranged this meeting."

Nawshi's thumb caressed the .33 hammer. He grinned at Ross. The other Tibetans were looting the pack mules, stripping off the transit and breaking into boxes of instruments. Ross edged toward Mack. He was as helpless now as

he had been before the rims of Lishu; he and the engineer both. Only Mack blamed him.

"And now," Tokura resumed, "you will tell me about the India Road." His smile was easy, engaging, but the words snapped, American style.

MACK'S brows contracted as he scowled at Ross. The road survey was a military secret. Only a few Chinese, and some top officials in Washington and London, were supposed to know its approximate route. Only a few officials and Ross. For years Ross had been trekking into the high country for panda, chiru, and one thing or another, so he'd volunteered his services. Queer kind of service, he allowed, but a man had to do what he knew best.

Tokura's smile subsided. He unfastened the holster flap at his belt, disclosing the flat butt of a Luger.

"What do you want to know?" Ross asked.

"I'll handle this," Mack growled.

Tokura slid out the pistol, rubbed it on his trousers and regarded the shine. "I know a great deal," he stated, "but not enough. I know, for instance, the Chinese wish a road from Chungking to India, so that when Japan takes their Burma Road they will have another. They want their Yankee friends to build it."

He cocked his head to one side, regarding Mack. "Then Yankee trucks will bring Yankee planes and guns. This is bad for Japan. There must be no road.

"I know, further," Tokura continued, "that the survey is complete, except for this last." He indicated the canyon's somber brown battlements that closed around them like a fortress.

Ross followed the sweep of his arm. It seemed impossible that engineers could claw out a roadbed here, yet he knew they would eventually. He said, "That's right, Captain."

"To get to the point," Tokura went on, "the Tibetan people want no road either. They were happy to coöperate when I was flown here from Indo-China and dropped by chute." He fitted a clip into the Luger and snapped it shut. "Mr. Mack, your hands were left free for a purpose. I want you to draw a map of the proposed route, as near as your memory permits."

Ross swallowed. The thing was fantastic, crazy! Stealing a plan of the India Road—the key to China's back door! So fantastic that Tokura might get away with it. But the craziest thing of all was Tokura's self-assurance. He took it for granted.

The Japanese waited, his face impassive. When nobody spoke he nodded to Nawshi. The wrangler walked to where the Chinese lay bound. He jerked the trio onto their feet and herded them toward the river bank. When they were lined up he drew his sword and approached the first.

"You will change your mind?" Tokura asked, and tipped the gun level.

Mack straightened and compressed his lips. Ross felt his accusation like the impact of a blow. Then Tokura gave the signal.

Nawshi slashed at the Chinese and severed his leg cords behind the knees. Before he could sag Nawshi gave him a push. The man twitched, toppled forward over the edge. There was a shriek, and then a faint splash as he struck the river. Nawshi moved on to the next.

Mack shuddered. "My God!" he breathed. "Why don't they shoot the poor devils?"

The crowd of Tibetans didn't look up. They went on with their looting. Ross turned away from the drowning man's antics. He'd seen cruelty before, plenty of it. Life was cheaper than lead here; a firing squad was a luxury. But this was his own man, part of his own failure.

Nawshi swiped again, slicing with a vicious hiss. The second Chinese collapsed. Nawshi rolled him over with his toe. When the last Chinese had disappeared he wiped his blade and replaced it in the scabbard. He strutted back to the captain.

"There are worse ways to die," Tokura suggested. "Much worse." He tightened his grip on the pistol.

The engineer's stare fixed on Ross. "Go on—I'm ready," he said without inflection.

"So?" Tokura's mouth pursed to an O. He beckoned Nawshi and began whispering.

ROSS squirmed, testing his wrists against the rope. It was knotted tight. He looked at the narrow river-side bench along which Tokura had traveled. One side pitched off into the Lishu. The other bent up abruptly into talus slopes and the canyon wall itself. Tokura had chosen the site well. It was a natural trap.

He took a breath and said, "I'll draw the map."

Mack straightened, and Ross saw the cords of muscle bunch along his jaw.

Tokura's head snapped up. "You? An ignorant old man like you?"

A slow flush spread across Ross's cheeks. He had lost face before the Japanese and before Ed Mack; he had lost face with himself. About all he had left to lose now was his life; and that wasn't enough. His life wouldn't pay for the others, nor a delay in the India Road. "You want the map or don't you?" he said.

Tokura's glance flickered to Mack and back, full of dubious calculation. "You have been over the route?"

Ross nodded, avoiding Mack's eyes.

"So?" Tokura said again, and his mouth relaxed. He barked an order to Nawshi. The wrangler stepped to the row of ponies, fished in a saddle bag, and returned with a large square of paper. Tokura unfolded it on the flat top of a split boulder at one edge of the meadow.

"This is a copy of a Chinese topographical map of Sikong," he outlined, "prepared by myself. You will do what your unwise countryman has refused. You will also tell me where bridges are to be constructed, where tunnels and cuts may be necessary."

He unclipped an automatic pencil from his tunic and twisted the lead to a point. "I am a graduate engineer, a trained highway specialist. I have studied the great military highways of the world—the Rhine *autostrade*, the Soviet Ordzhonikidze, the trans-Iraq oil line. Even your U. S. Lincoln Highway I know." He talked by rote, Ross thought, as though he were trying to impress himself. Then he swung around fiercely. "So don't imagine you can trick me!"

Sword raised, Nawshi moved on to the next.

Ross peered at the paper. He knew how much was at stake among its mass of brown and green, its dotted lines and uncharted blank spots. It was one of the few existing maps of the region and therefore large scale, too large for accurate survey. But under the circumstances a plain pencilled line would be sufficient for enemy bombers and saboteurs. Even a guide knew that.

"I can't draw with my hands tied," he pointed out.

Tokura shrugged. Nawshi loosened the rope and slipped it off. Ross held up his hands and shook them. Then he grasped the pencil and bent down. He heard Mack breathing hard beside him.

He hesitated, made a mark. Automatically he reached for his breast pocket. Tokura gave a warning grunt and jammed the pistol at his head.

"Oh." Ross blinked. "Just going to twist a smoke."

Tokura shot him a sour look. "You will not joke, please."

Ross spilled some tobacco into his paper and rolled it firm. He licked the edge, watching from the corner of one eye. The Cham raiders had finished and were squatting at a respectful distance. Tokura stood with his back to them, covering the two Americans, his eyes narrowed and his hands steady on the Luger. Nawshi waited to one side.

Ross groped for a match. "Nawshi."

The wrangler put down his rifle and advanced warily. He tossed his fire kit on the table rock. Ross picked it up, struck the steel once and missed. On the second try a spark leaped into the tinder. He snatched a handful, waved it in the air and blew. The dry shreds burst into flame.

He let out a yip and dropped the tinder. Tongues of fire licked at the map, curling back one edge.

"Fool!" Tokura stormed. "Clumsy fool!" He hopped forward, beating at the smoldering paper with both hands.

Ross aimed high. The heel of his palm caught Tokura's forearm with all his strength behind it. The Luger spun out of his grip, clattered onto the ground. With a squeal Tokura went scrambling.

"Break for it!" Ross shouted.

He eluded Nawshi and cut into the clear. Mack pounded beside him, stride for stride across the meadow. He lowered his head and dug in for speed. He swerved right, then left, and right again, zigzagging for cover. The Tibetans were running too, racing for their horses, as he gained the first strip of brush.

He tripped over a root and sprawled. Mack yanked him up. Then the engineer went ahead, crashing through the tangle of undergrowth that paralleled the river. But even as he dodged and sidestepped, Ross thought ahead to the time when they would reach the open again.

THEIR chance of escape was almost non-existent. And yet he could regard his dilemma with detachment. Animal Ross without a gun. Animal Ross being hunted for a change. It struck him as ironic.

Ross was not certain at what point he first saw the ram.

When they did break into an exposed stretch Mack pulled up panting. Behind them the Tibetans booted their horses to a gallop. If they kept to the bottoms, Tokura's men would overhaul them in another minute or two. Ross craned his neck toward the rims, jutting up solid and massive.

"You're crazy!" Mack gasped. "Not that way!"

Ross didn't argue. He saved his wind, because he knew he was going to need it badly.

He started to climb. Moving fast, he wound up through a snarl of big rocks. Mack hesitated, then hurried along after him.

At the first vertical face—a dry waterfall—he wormed up on his belly. His pursuers halted long enough to dismount and follow on foot. He had gained from the maneuver. Not much, but some.

He could make out Nawshi, scaling in the lead like an ape, and the others spread out on both sides to prevent any doubling back. Tokura pressed from behind. He had recovered his pistol and was driving with a cold mechanical fury.

Ross found what he'd been hunting—a peculiar wavy scratch on gneiss. Farther on he discovered another. He lost time studying the terrain, while Mack grumbled with impatience, and then moved on.

There was a bounce to his step, an animation in his eyes now, as he threaded up a ridge, sure and soundless in felt boots. He stooped forward in concentration, examining the ground, oblivious to everything but sign. This one thing he still could do.

The ridge played out into a slide of decomposed stuff. Ross hunched down and sprinted for the far side. As he emerged a gun cracked twice in rapid succession. A slug ripped at his shoulder, knocked him to his knees. He flopped down and felt his way along.

The heavy blast reverberated, echoing back and forth across the canyon like thunder, dislodging showers of gravel. He recognized Tokura's Luger. The Tibetan carbines were heavier still.

He shook his head to clear the haze, groping for a solution. With a jolt he knew he had the answer—almost. The answer to the India Road, to Tokura, and most of all to Ed Mack. Only it was muddled. He couldn't think straight—like an engineer for instance. Then Mack was dragging him on to shelter.

From there the slope steepened gradually until most of it was hand over hand. Ross climbed in jerks and stops with his face screwed tight, clutching his useless arm. He was scarcely aware of the jangling agony and the blood. There was some fact he must remember, some trick to outwit the Jap. But what was it?

Nawshi and the other Tibetans were within easy rifle range and gaining steadily, but they would hold fire until they had him cornered higher up, against the cliffs. They could afford not to waste powder and shells, and nothing Tokura might urge would change their minds.

He and Mack passed the vegetation belt. Above there was only naked rock and snow, which meant they would have to crawl for protection. The Tibetans had closed in behind but still they held fire. The vast deep silence was worse than the clamor of guns, more nerve-wracking. Even Tokura had put up his pistol, as though he appreciated their plight, and enjoyed it.

ROSS stopped at the first snow spot. Without comment he pointed to a single hoof print. It was fresh, with firm edges.

For a second he thought Mack was going to hit him. The engineer took a step forward, his bloodshot eyes blazing. "I've strung along this far," he threatened, "because I hoped you knew what you were doing. But now—"

Mack didn't understand yet, Ross saw. He wasn't the kind to accept explanations. He had to be shown.

Ross turned, but the engineer grabbed his coat. "Are you off your head, man?" he demanded. "Trailing a sheep. A damn sheep!"

Ross squared his shoulders and it made him wince. "Have you got any better scheme?" he asked softly.

As he looked a felt hat appeared over the next ledge. It was Nawshi, followed by Tokura. One by one the Tibetans clambered into view. They were ascending with a dogged grimness, so confident of the outcome they could afford to take their time. There would be no outdistancing them either. They were good in the mountains.

Ross ran ahead into the snow with Mack at his heels. Hot noon sun beat down, converting pockets into dazzling slush. He snatched up a handful and rubbed it on his wound. He was tired, dizzy with pain, but a wild energy drove him on. He was on the right track.

Somewhere above, somewhere along the rims, was an argali ram—the best mountaineer of them all. But not even an argali could scale a thousand feet of sheer precipice. Somewhere among the crags and cliffs on top there must be a passage. And anywhere a sheep could go, Animal Ross could go.

They floundered through a long snow field, thigh-deep, gaining the shelter of the upper side just as Tokura and his men made the bottom. Ross and Mack dove behind a bank and wriggled as far as they could. An inch at a time they hugged their way around the adjoining rib. The Lishu was a ribbon directly underneath.

And then, without quite realizing it, they were at the rims.

A rock wall rose slick and unbroken to the horizon. From its base a spillway of detritus fanned out to where they lay, dropping off into space at the lower end. The only choice was up, or down.

The avalanche churned from wall to wall, poured them into Lishu Gorge a mile below.

A set of hoofprints led upward across the slide. Ross lumbered ahead, sinking into soft treacherous snow. It gave way, slipping over the rotten stone in huge blobs, but he held his footing. The trail made a diagonal and veered into the cliff. A straight narrow couloir, less than thirty feet wide, opened up. He pushed inside and met a stream of wind; wind, he knew, that blew from the plateau on top.

As he grasped the full significance Mack croaked, "Look out! Here they come!"

The Tibetans were so close he could make out the crunch of their boots. With Tokura leading they marched like a column of tireless ants, their bared chests shining copper red against the snow.

They hadn't seen the break yet, but they would.

Suddenly the fog rolled back from Ross's mind, and he had a plan of action. He knew beyond any doubt what he must do now; the only thing he could do. What he needed was a little timing, a lot of luck. The question was: could he last?

The snow was soupy as he began the final ascent toward the summit. Rivulets trickled over the chute's sides, cutting channels, and the rubble underfoot

stirred uneasily. He maneuvered along one edge and heaved himself up by a series of toe and finger holds. It was slippery, perilous work where one wrong guess could plunge him all the way. His only guide was the tracks.

ROSS was never certain afterward at what point he first saw the ram. It seemed to materialize from the rocks, poised for flight. Ross crouched and held his breath.

It was a museum specimen. The great horns extended laterally from the side of the head, spiralled upright to majestic points. The haunches, the coat, even the fat tail, were of epic proportions. With a confused sensation of satisfaction and regret Ross realized that he had made the stalk of his life.

A shout rang out, and the argali was gone. He vanished as abruptly and completely as he had appeared.

Ross tore his eyes from the spot and wheeled around. Tokura, Nawshi and the others were entering the foot of the couloir just below, running now, afraid he might get away. He spotted a chimney branching off the main chute. "In there!" he yelled and gave Mack a shove.

He waited until the Tibetans saw him, outlined against the white background. A dozen carbine stocks thumped against shoulders, but Tokura was quicker. Ross flattened as a Luger bullet raked his sleeve. With a desperate lunge he threw himself into the crevice beside Mack and wedged there.

The rifles opened up with a roar. Slugs spattered around his head, ricocheted with a deadly insistent whine. Particles of lead flicked his body as the Tibetans crawled higher to improve their angle of fire.

Explosions rebounded through the chasm and deepened into a growl. Ross plugged his ears to dim the cannonade. He'd done all he could; if he had misjudged, that was too bad. The Tibs were as good shots as they were climbers.

Then he could no longer distinguish guns, but only a steady growing rumble. Tons of rock and snow, jarred by the vibration, jiggled free. Gently, at first, the mass worked loose and eased down the couloir floor. With grinding power it gathered speed, and the earth seemed to shake and split wide open.

A storm of dust and flying ice hung in suffocating clouds. Overflow lapped at his feet with suction force, tugging him off balance. Ross braced his elbows and wrenched himself deeper into the niche. Then he shut his eyes, closing out the death that hurtled past by the width of his own body, and glued his face to the rock.

The avalanche churned from wall to wall, heaving and buckling, spewing up debris, and poured its weight into Lishu Gorge a mile or more below. It was deafening, beating down all the senses. It was all the noise he had ever heard, compressed into one noise.

When Ross finally opened his eyes, it was as though he were looking into a vacuum. The chute was swept clean. Tokura and Nawshi and the rest, all of them were gone; they'd been trapped in its path or on the spillway cone—the first casualties of the India Road.

He reached out and touched Ed Mack, huddling behind him in the chimney, just to make sure they were both alive.

DUSK was settling before they reached the plateau edge, where the break-through leveled off into grasslands. Far to the south the ice-capped Himalayas loomed up. Beyond lay British India.

"Just a kid stunt," Ross elaborated as they left the rimrock. "I set off a snowslide with a .22 back home once. So with all those Tibs gunning together—"

"Stunt?" Mack chuckled. He had regained the blunt edge of his cheerfulness, and had to assert it. "That's no stunt. It's a basic principle of physics—the dynamics of sound waves. You're an engineer only you don't know it."

"Thanks," Ross said dryly, "but if it wasn't for that sheep trail—"

He broke off and rubbed his chin. The survey was complete. Mack had told him so on the way up. A passage was all they'd needed; American brains and Chinese labor would do the rest. Someday trucks would roll here.

Then Ross chuckled, too. "Sure," he agreed, "I'm a helluv'n engineer."

Harnden hesitates before he flushes, doesn't shoot until the bird's way out.

THE WAY OF A CHAMPION

By

HAROLD TITUS

HE WAS alone at a corner table in the club bar.

"Hi, Joe!" he said, and sounded half tight.

"Hi, yourself!" I said, and glanced at his fresh highball. I'd never seen him hoist so much as a rare one. "Drinking again?"

He didn't smile. "Sit," he said. "This'll be the first in three years." He beckoned a waiter.

"Three years," I said when I'd ordered, "is a long time."

"Yeah," he agreed with a grin, "but I've got to make a speech."

I remembered an announcement on the bulletin board. "You dog fanciers on the prowl?" I asked. "That it? Some of your crowd were getting into the elevator just now."

"Going up for drinks." He glanced at his watch. "Think they're fortifying against something special," he said savagely. "But they don't know the half of it," he said. "Boy—if they *did!*"

His mood was vindictive, I saw.

"That kind of speech, is it?" I asked, not feeling easy.

"I'll say!" His fingers trembled on the long glass. "A presentation speech," he said. "Me, for the Wolverine Field Trial Association, presenting the grouse trophy. A presentation to a louse," he said, "and how I'm going to love it!"

"Well, *now!*" I said, the way you will.

"Nobody alive ever dreaded talking

ILLUSTRATED BY LYNN BOGUE HUNT

the way I did when I walked in tonight," he confided. "And nobody," he whispered, "ever loved a speech like I love the one I can make now!"

He grinned and his wide, bronzed face was suddenly beatific.

"Wish you were a dog man, Joe," he went on earnestly. "Wish you'd followed field trials. I wish," he said, "you knew Detroit and some of its swell folks and some of its lice better. Especially, its lice!"

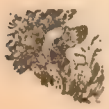
"Bert Harnden?" I asked, because things clicked, if vaguely.

He nodded. "Number One Louse. Object of my address," he said.

"Well, luck!" I lifted my glasss and he saluted with his but put it down untasted.

"Tell you about it," he said. "Tell you how— B'George," he said, leaning forward, "I'll rehearse my speech! I'll give it to you, Joe, the way I'll give it to those birds upstairs, right now getting a skinfull so they can take what they *think's* coming!"

He sat back and scowled; then caught his breath and began—



EVER hear of Harnden's Marquette Duke, Joe? Have? Yes, the *News* carried a roto picture of him a few weeks back. Ever hear of Cady Tool & Die? No, you're too new in town. It's gone, now. And likely you never heard of Brent Cady, either. Well, lot of up-and-comin' kids disappeared in the bad years.

But you'll have to know about the dog and the plant and the people before this speech of mine'll add up.

The Cadys, now, Joe—hard to make you see 'em. Wish you could've seen their house. Out beyond Bloomfield Hills; out beyond the embassies the heavy-money lads build. Some earlier Cady'd started it with timbers his oxen snaked out and other Cadys'd added on. Nothing much changed since the 'nineties except paint and plumbing. Yellow roses at the steps and their maid always wore speckled aprons to her shoe tops and generally you smelled bread baking. Mean anything? .... Swell!

I got to know Cady through dogs. Of all the field trial crowds, this grouse dog gang is the closest knit, I expect. You don't hear so much about 'em as you do the quail and chicken boys. Not a spectacular game. Not a racket for big going dogs that cover miles at a cast and may be out of sight half the time. It's closer, more precise work. It's— well, it's like a string quartet compared to a symphony orchestra; or a— trying to say, maybe, that it's kind of a subtle game.

Now, wins meant nothing to Cady; what he wanted to do was develop the type of dog he'd set his mind on and the rest was chips from the hewing. Oh, he'd have gotten a bang out of a big win like our Great Lakes Championship, sure; but trophies and recognition were—well, chips.

Just the opposite from Bert Harnden, see? Winning meant everything to Harnden. World's worst loser and as luck had it almost every time both had entries their dogs came out as brace mates and just as regularly Harnden took a trimming. Cady's weakest scrub'd beat the ears off something Harnden'd spent thousands on. Just one of those things, Joe, and it drove Harnden wild; plain, savage wild, and Cady, being what he was, never tumbled that he'd gotten to be a burr under the tail of a grudge-bearing, material-minded thug.

Can see 'em now: Cady—little Brent at his heels—handling his dog sort of objectively; not so interested in performance as in pegging his own strengths and weaknesses as breeder and trainer, understand? And then Harnden: big, beefy, years younger, red in the neck and downright poisonous from being shown up. Watching it gave a man a lift, those days. Remembering it makes you shiver!

Now, Cady Tool & Die was an earthy little plant. More like a family than a shop. But I know top-flight engineers who'll admit Cady'd saved their bacon plenty times by getting up a tool or fixture that had 'em stopped. And on production lines today—even in the new defense plants—Cady ideas carry the banner.

Young Brent followed his dad in the shop like he had at field trials. In there

from when he had to tip-toe up to a bench and those old-time mechanics fought to teach him things.

Cady'd expanded in the cockeyed 'twenties and was a babe in arms at finance, so when the banks folded he was sunk. Never knew what hit him and that left him wide open to Harnden.

Stinkin' rich, Harnden. Born to it, but one of those guys with second sight, even so. One of the few who hunched what was coming and when the crash hit he was as liquid as the Detroit River.

That's why Cady turned to him. Or thought he turned. Fact is, Harnden rigged Cady's approach and when it seemed the shop would go floppo before breakfast he put up dough for a breather. Big, open-handed Bert! All he took—and excuse my retching—was a one-year mortgage on the homestead and its chattels.

Agony stuff, Joe; I'll rush it. Harnden bought Tool & Die paper for a song. Week later Cady left his lawyer's office. By a ten-story window. Mrs. Cady—they called it pneumonia but it was heartbreak. And the kid, a senior in the engine school at Ann Arbor, came in to make one of the damnedest last-ditch stands with the shop you ever saw.

There's always some business, even with grass in the streets, and Brent got it all, seemed. He stayed in and pitched and got kind of immortal by the stunts he pulled. When Knudsen got Billings strung out on the defense thing few months back plenty lads remembered and began wondering where Brent was because he'd be a natural for a Billings aid. That, Joe, when he hadn't been heard of in long enough for the run-of-the-country kid to be plumb forgotten.

His fight netted nothing, of course. Year after his mother's death he was on the pavements, and I mean *pavements*. No soles in his shoes. No home, no family, no business. Nothin'.

Half-dozen tried to make jobs for him but no soap. Just walked the streets after any old work except relief or gotten up for him special. Hungry, too, but grinning all the time; chin up, and at the end with guts enough and enough of his old man's self-consciousness to want to see if he could stand the final twist Harnden put on the screws. Because Harnden even then hadn't squared accounts with the Cadys as he saw 'em.

TED GIESLER had the kid here for lunch that day. Dragged him in and said Brent trembled when the chow came on. Harnden was here, too, and when he'd finished he sauntered over to their table just as if he was fit to mix with white folks.

Never any words between them, of course. Harnden'd taken everything down to the furniture and dogs all nice and legal and Brent wasn't the squawking kind. Not by seven miles!

Giesler says Harnden was drunk. It's likely. He'd commenced to guzzle in a workmanlike manner about then.

"How's tricks, Brent?" he said, drawing out a chair.

"So-so," Brent said, grinning. Had a swell grin. Dark hair, dark eyes, skin naturally pale and a smile made his face all light up. Did then, Giesler says; all but his eyes. They stayed scornful.

"Tough to catch on," Harnden said, like some Chink might start his extra fancy line of torture. Brent said he'd heard it was and grinned wider. "Maybe you're too choosy," Harnden said.

That might be, Brent admitted. Then he said: "All I want, though, is something not too illegal. Any of your neighbors looking for a chauffeur or a gardener's helper?"

Giesler says a light commenced to flicker in Harnden's fish eyes, as if here came a chance he'd never dared hope for.

"Not likely," he said, looking hard at Brent. "But I need a man," he said, and his lips drew back and it was like somebody screwing up a fiddle string, according to Giesler. "My kennel man's quit," he said, "and I'm needing somebody to take my new dogs to glory."

I'd bet my shirt, Joe, he never had any idea Brent 'd do anything but go through the roof. That offer was just rubbing it in. But there wasn't a second's hesitation. Giesler said he could see all the factors falling into a pattern for Brent. He'd taken a terrible lacing but figured kids his age had more coming before things straightened out and he wanted

to know if he had what it takes to stand deliberate humiliation on top of the rest.

So—no hesitation. He just stood up and asked when he could start.

Lookit my hand shake, Joe! It gets me yet! That louse! For him it was a sadistic tournament. Wasn't a week after Brent went to work before Harnden began asking folks out to see his dogs. That's what he'd say: to see his dogs, when what he wanted was for them to see Brent Cady, working as his servant. Wouldn't let anybody muff. Passed out blueprints to all comers.

"Now, that pup," he'd say, walking 'em up to the runs or wherever Brent might be without letting 'em get in a word, looks like—

"Oh, you know Brent, don't you?" he'd say, breaking off short as if his interest in dogs had made him forget good manners—as if he had any! "Brent Cady?" he'd say. "Thought you did," he'd say, and go on talking dog and gloating, likely, at another sock he'd taken at a Cady.

Have a drink, Joe? No, I've still got mine. Coming closer to the take-off of my speech, now. Long road, but you need background.

Now, this Marquette line: it was old man Cady's. Brent'd had a finger in it, too, of course. They'd started with Marquette King, who'd 've gone to the top if distemper hadn't cut him down. After he died they commenced mating his sons and daughters, prospecting for the nick they needed to bring him back.

When Brent took over Harnden's dogs, there was this three-months pup, already registered as Harnden's Marquette Duke. He was from a mating Cady'd planned before things went haywire and Harnden kept the line identifiable, being material-minded enough to never mind a detail like pride. When Brent set eyes on the Duke they say he stopped in his tracks.

That pup, see, was a dead ringer for Marquette King. Same short coupling; same swell feathering starting; high-domed head with bumblebees over the eyes and mahogany chops and black and white markings like a design and a look on his face that talked. I mean, *talked!* Likely seeing the King reincarnated brought home to Brent what he'd had and lost like a kick in the belly.

Well—devilish experience working for Harnden with dogs his father'd developed. It was too much for him. He'd kept grinning under a lot of punishment but in that one he'd overloaded himself.

Never a word, never a whimper. But he lost weight and his smile faded. Worried because he *cared,* understand, and when he found out he couldn't roll with Harnden's final punch he was a gone goose!

The way he leaned on this Duke pup showed it. He worked his head off on the whole string but that pup was like a human for him. Spent hours on Duke alone; had him sleep in his room over the Harnden garage, which was all Brent had to call home. Began to dodge folks he knew. Sometimes, at night, somebody'd see him walking a back road, Duke at heel, head down and pelting along as if he had to get away from something. It ain't a nice tale so far, Joe!

Maybe Harnden got that. If he did, he ate it up. But maybe he muffed it because of his interest in the pup. He watched that pooch like a man 'll watch a woman he has to keep and can't be sure of. His interests'd been pretty much narrowed down to dogs, anyhow. And booze. Right guys wouldn't truck with him, but he didn't seem to give a damn; he had an interest in life and a chance to satisfy it in the Duke.

Oh, Joe, that Duke! All the nose there is; bird sense and to spare. He had style—*style,* man! And heart and strength and courage. And on top of all the rest, a will.

THAT won't click for you, Joe; you don't know how hard it is to handle a dog that has everything, and then a will. Duke handled swell in the yard; drop or go out or come in to a gesture. But in the field—uh-*huh-h-h!* Wanting to go! Wanting to use that heart! Wanting to use those legs! Begging to go fast and faster; dying to go far and farther; pleading with his eyes, defiance in the cock of his ears. It's nip and tuck, then, who wins—man or dog!

He ran in a puppy trial that fall and did he go to town! But there was as much talk about Brent and his handling as there was of the pup. He certainly did a job. Had to. Every time the Duke made a turn he'd look back at Brent and begin to talk, way a dog can.

"Let's go, boss!" he'd say, plain as words. "Let's get out of here, boss!" he'd beg. "Can't find 'em under your feet!" he'd argue. "Birds over the hill!" he'd yell. "I got the legs and the heart so lemme *go!*" he'd say.

Whistle and voice and gestures don't hold a dog down. You have to put your living soul into it. It's a fight, every jump, every second. And when Brent came out he looked like he'd been drawn through a knot hole, but he'd won. Made monkeys of the other handlers, too.

They went east for a derby in November. Dozen times I thought the pup 'd bolt and go yonder to disqualification but Brent held him. Held him with his heart's blood and when it was over—Duke won hands down—you never saw such a look of loving reproach as he gave the kid. Oh, how he sobbed and rolled those big, brown eyes and licked his chops and wondered why a man who said he loved him couldn't understand that he just *had* to go further and faster!

Oh, Harnden had a champion making, all right. Proud as Lucifer, too. Didn't matter that Cady breeding and Brent's handling had made the dog. Dah! He owned him; that'll all that counted. When he looked at the Duke a light came into his eyes that made me think of old Si Marner jingling his loose change.

Next fall the Duke won a half-dozen times. Not big stakes. Wasn't ready for that. But he ran in all-age go's where he had plenty competition and ate it up. He was something to see when the judges gave him a decision. Mister, he'd pose for the gallery like a bench dog and when they'd applaud he'd look up at Brent and say, "That's for us, boss! That hits us where we live, don't it, boss? We got plenty on the ball, all right, boss!"

Well, Brent didn't have enough on the ball to outlast it. He quit, without any warning, when engineers were still a dime a dozen, and disappeared and nobody knows where he's been since.

Nobody of our gang knows, Joe. Not a soul, except the speaker of the evening! I didn't know until six weeks back when we ran the Great Lakes Championship. And it didn't add up to me until forty minutes ago by the clock!

Oh, after a few months you heard rumors. He'd caught on in South Bend. Next month, somebody'd crossed his trail in Milwaukee; then the coast; or Cincinnati, or Connecticut. Stabbing at a comeback as business came back, see? But drifting and that's a bad sign. Trying to stand humiliation and not cutting the buck was poison to him.

After Billings started handling these defense jobs you'd hear big shots mention him. Billings 's got four-five bright young bucks who savvy tooling and production working out detail for him, understand, and they're sitting in golden chairs when this mess is over. You've seen 'em scooting in and out of here all hours, Joe, because Billings hasn't been out of his suite upstairs since he sank his teeth in the job. And the Brent Cady who'd fought for Cady Tool & Die was Billings' meat and everybody knew it.

But no drifter has the drive and fire a man's got to have to stay out front these days. Brent was a licked tramp, looked like. He certainly looked the part the day I saw him with his feet on the ground again—and no foolin; his pacs were worn to hell—and a week's growth of beard!

Surprises you, Joe? Believe me, it'll surprise the gang upstairs! But I won't spring it right off the bat. No. I'll start talking about Harnden, guest of honor—honor! *Blah!*

So here goes this dress rehearsal. Chairs pushed back. Speaker's on his feet. Mr. Toastmaster, gentlemen and all the rest of the rot and I'll swing into my act.

I'LL remind 'em Harnden's been running field trial dogs longer than most of us. I'll point out how, recent years, he's handled his own entries because he can't find a man to trust. That'll set 'em thinking about Brent, see? Remind 'em it was Brent Cady who gave Harnden his leg up on the big time.

Then I'll tell how, lately, he's concentrated on Marquette Duke, grandson of Cady's Marquette King, and that'll sink another point: that Harnden's money simply bought his way up there, and how!

Ought to give a character sketch of the Duke, next; tell of the battle that's been going on. How, as Duke won, he got harder to handle; how it tested any man's stuff to keep him in control and I'll only be giving the devil his due. We've got to admit Harnden did a lot with that dog; more than most could 've done with the stubborn devil Brent left behind him.

O.K. that far. I'll drop down to this year's Great Lakes stake. I'll sketch the field: sixty of the world's best grouse dogs fighting for the most prized cup. I'll tell about the brilliance of the first series; about the heart-breaking competition the second day; and how the judges couldn't agree and called the Duke and this big Vermont pointer, six times a champion and with two legs on the cup, back again!

So far, so good. I'll touch on the weather: the hard rain and swirls of snow and the larrupin' wind. No day for man or dog or bird to be out. I'll give 'em a picture of that poplar flat where we parked our cars. Judges on their horses, bundled till hell won't stand it; gallery with all the duds on folks can walk under and, once there, with no thought for anything but the dogs.

Then I'll bring Harnden in, riding on the back seat of his Cadillac with the Duke beside him, nose out the window, crazy wild to go. I'll get Harnden out of his car in his tailored clothes and dominant presence. Got to hand it to the sucker; cuts a figure. And I'll tell how the Duke came out with a rush fit to go through the leash because he knew that day's once in a dog's lifetime.

I'll describe Harnden walking over towards the judges, dragging Duke behind him. I'll have to make a point of that. The dog don't want to go spite of how excited he's been. He's speared something. He's picked a scent off that wind that keeps his head turned back and his ears stiff and his eyes on fire!

I guess— Steady, now! Got to think this one out. Guess I'll just say the Duke was looking up-wind at a ragged stranger, standing all alone beyond the last parked car. That'll do: ragged stranger. Alone. Forlorn looking. Hunting cap down to his eyebrows; coat collar up to his ears. Slender guy. Unimpressive.

But I ain't going to tell *all,* Joe. Won't mention the prickles on my back. I'll skip how something about the set of his head, gearing in with the dog's actions, knocked me for a loop. I won't admit I walked over and stuck out my hand and said, "Hullo, Brent!"

No. Won't tell that. So I won't have to tell how he looked me straight in the eye and said, "Aren't you mistaken?"

Won't have to tell how the look in his face was like a punch in mine. It'd been five years, but he knew me. And it was as if, say, I'd intruded on a bride's privacy. Or risked outraging some gentle soul's religious principles. It was—nev' mind. Hope you get it.

Maybe I better not tell what Harnden's chauffeur said, either. I turned away from Brent in kind of a fog, understand. I walked down toward the judges, all churning inside. Harnden's boy was sopping at a seat cushion with a dust mop and I smelled whiskey and, through kind of a roaring in my head I heard him say to another driver: "Sure! Tight as a tick! Been all night!"

Get it, Joe? The louse is drunk, when a great dog's record's in the balance! What it meant to him don't matter a damn, but a dog like that—why, he deserves a break!

But I'll have to skip that. I'll just describe the hush that came over the gallery when the judges called the dogs up. Wind blasting away, rain slashing at us, but still a hush you could *hear,* if you understand, because there were the two greatest grouse dogs that ever went down in competition.

AWAY they went, pointer casting left and Duke right. Fast? Oh, mister, did they travel! Small chance of a bird in that skinny popple cover a day like that and the dogs knew it and mopped her up in no time.

Out front's the pointer's handler. Pace behind's Bert Harnden, walking stiff, like a soldier on parade. Maybe I'll say that. I won't have to hint he was drunk. Not then. Behind them, the three judges on horses and then the gallery, a few mounted but most on foot, traveling in a big fan. And, over to the right, all alone, my ragged stranger.

We dip into a shallow valley and the pointer finds in a swale while Duke's away on the other flank. The big dog holds and his handler flushes and shoots and it's all perfect, with Duke on the short end in the first ten minutes.

Worse than that, he's excited. I'll remind the boys it's his third day of competition and he's hair trigger, razor edge. And then, too, Harnden's letting him go. He starts for the ridge, wide open. Lord, how he goes! And Harnden don't even seem to see. Damn it all, ordinarily he'd have turned him a whole minute before he did! But he just marches along, stiff, like a soldier on parade—or any other stew bum! And away goes the dog and I feel like crying. I mean, *crying!*

But he comes to, finally. He begins to whistle. Duke never falters first two-three blasts but charges right for the top, hell-bent to go over and out of sight and if a dog's out of sight three minutes in this Great Lakes and his handler can't show the judges he's pointing in the immediate vicinity of where he disappeared, it's good night! Oh, a tough rule, Joe. But it's one of the things that makes this championship worth slaving for.

So the Duke's on the prod. He's bulling it. That old urge to go far and fast's working on him and he knows Harnden's grips has slackened. I look at Brent Cady, slogging by himself through the wet brush and bracken. His fist goes up to his mouth when the Duke goes on. When the dog all but goes out of sight he stops and stiffens like a man will who's holding his breath. He relaxes when the Duke finally turns—Harnden's blown his guts out, almost, in that whistle—and charges down hill in long, clean bounds, one ear folded back and tail like a battle flag and I'll bet a dime Brent's thinking what I am: that the whistle never turned him; that's he's so hysterical he's forgotten the whistle; that he's found out he can get away from Harnden; that he turned because his bird sense told him it was a bet.

It was, too. You can hear 'em gasp when he finds. Two hundred folks gasping together can be heard above a lot of weather. He finds in mid-air. Between jumps. He smacks into that scent and whirls like an acrobat and comes down stiff-legged, bouncing sideways through the wet leaves, head and tail up on as pretty a point as a man ever saw! I'll ask 'em if any of 'em ever saw prettier!

I'll describe how Harnden walked in, with everybody motionless. How he acts like he's walking in his sleep. How he almost steps on the dog; how he stands there and hesitates before he flushes; how he doesn't shoot until the bird's away out. Doing his damnedest to ball it up for Duke, understand.

They'll get it, Joe. They'll understand when I say the Duke turns back right when Harnden waves him left. Won't have to add it up, I'm betting. No need for footnotes. Even the outsiders'll know Harnden's drunk and that the dog, in the race of his life, isn't getting the help a dog has to have. Just *has* to have.

I'll describe how he moved even faster. How he swarmed back up the slope and cut away wide. How his tongue dripped blood from a briar scratch, spraying his white breast. Making two moves to the pointer's one. He'd bulled the whistle and gotten away with it. He'd found on his own right afterward. He was doing the thing all his instincts had urged him to do since he was a puppy. He'd shaken off Harnden's grip and was going high, wide and handsome on his way to hell!

AIN'T it going to be fun, Joe, to watch Harnden when I get that far? But it's only a feeler. Only a tap. The first punch'll come right afterward, see? I'll paint 'em a picture of that cedar swamp, with scarcely any edge at all; just a sharp break between upland and swamp so thick a dog'll go out of sight in one jump. The Duke heads for it. He knows birds'll be in cover like that, day like

that. He's got the bit in his teeth. He's nuts to find more birds. You can tell by the very way he moves he's going to dive in and lose himself.

Maybe I'll turn to Harnden then. Maybe I'll say, "You figured it was curtains then, didn't you?" Maybe I'll say, "You should've seen how purple your jowls got, whistling." Maybe I'll say, "Harnden, your chances weren't worth a dime. The Duke'd licked you." Maybe I'll say it. Depends.

But I *will* tell 'em something nobody dreams. Both whistles are going it hard with the pointer away out and Duke not a dozen jumps from the wall of cedar when this third blast cuts in. Sounded like a man whistling through his fingers. Judges didn't get it; nobody did. Things too tense, see? But *I* got it because it came from off to the right and the ragged stranger is off there!

Sure, Joe. Brent. The dog'd had the wind, that far, understand? Duke'd had that one whiff of Brent before they were put down. After that, the wind was wrong. But Brent had whistled and Duke knew the pitch of it and stopped dead. Dead! He stood looking, tail still, ears surprised, whole posture incredulous, hooking that sound up, sure's you wear pants, with that scent he thought he'd speared back by the parked cars.

The judges only watch the dog. They don't see that flick of a hand in the brush, gesturing left. All they see is the Duke spin left and trim that swamp edge like a cook trims pie crust!

Well, there's open country and a ridge again and as the Duke heads for the top Harnden begins whistling. He's come to, a little. I'll tell him he acted fuddled; that I thought he'd blow his lungs out. I'll ask him if he thinks he got any attention. I'll remind him how Duke hit the top, still going; went leg down, belly down before he looked. Didn't look to the whistle, Joe. Just glanced back as if to say s'long and be damned to you and, b'George, his ears drop like he's been cut with a switch and he turns back and that hand sticking out of the frayed sleeve drops down to the ragged stranger's side.

Never a heat like it. The pointer, working like a clock, finds twice. Duke backs, but his heart's not in it. He's stung, hurt, pride's touched. Dogs know when they're behind and he's nuts to try harder when he's been trying to the limit of safety every second.

The boys upstairs'll remember what he tried to say when he cut close to us in that next half-hour.

"Big stiff's got me down!" he tried to say. "Found three to my one!" he tried to say. "Danged birds're scarce; got to go *wider!*" kept trying to say! "Lemme go! I'll find if I can go *far* enough!"

I'll ask Harnden if he thinks the Duke was talking to him. Why, he never turned to the whistle once! Never looked back until he'd be right at the brink of disaster. But he never failed, then. Looked in the last jump before he'd be out of sight and control and always, out there by itself, a hand would be up to yank him back to safety!

I'll admit to 'em I couldn't breathe, knowing what nobody else did. I'll tell how Brent's face got white and how he'd crouch tense as a set trap in the pinches and pull for that dog to look. Didn't dare whistle again, of course; somebody'd have tumbled, sure. He had to handle by whatever it is. Will force? Determination? A dominance that's above distances and sounds? I pass. He does whatever it is has to be done and the Duke finds one, two, three, and handles his birds like the royalty he is.

Kind of a nightmare to me when the judges stop their horses.

"Take them up, gentlemen!" somebody yells and I'm telling you that pointer loped in through tears!

The Duke stands away off watching Harnden. Or so the crowd thinks. Stands like a statue, wind rippling the deep tail feathering, that one ear still folded back. But I'll tell Harnden he wasn't watching him. I'll tell him it wasn't until a hand lifted behind us that the Duke started in, and remind him how the dog tried to go past the crowd and would have if somebody hadn't stepped out and grabbed him.

Nobody got that. The judges were shaking hands with Harnden so they didn't even notice how the Duke fought his leash and whined and watched a man running back along the course; running

as if he'd left something undone that just had to *be* done!

HE stopped, picked up his drink and put it down again. "Don't need it, I guess," he said and laughed shakily. "That's her, Joe. The cup'll be in front of me. I'll pick it up and offer it and—well, I'll ad lib from there out."

"That's swell!" I said, tingling. "But see here! Won't you be showing Harnden that he did what he set out to do: crush the kid?"

He pointed a slow finger at me and his smile grew dazzling.

"The tag!" he whispered. "The payoff!" he muttered, looking around cautiously. "Because of Brent, I couldn't have done this an hour ago. But as I step in tonight a chap's arguing with the doorman.

" 'He's engaged,' the doorman says. 'No one is to see him, I tell you,' he says, high-hat as a flunky'll get.

" 'But I've an appointment,' the chap says and I peg him. It's Brent.

"Good clothes on, Joe; shaved, shined, and his voice is the voice of a man so sure of himself he can overlook the officiousness of an underling.

" 'When he's finished,' he said to the doorman, 'page me.'

"I spoke to him, then. He turned and flushed and grinned and shook hands. 'Hullo, there!' he said. 'I owe you an apology. That day, I just couldn't—'

" 'Forget it,' I said and we sat down.

"We talked about the stake as if he'd been just another spectator. Great dog, the Duke, he said. He'd always felt he had it in him. His father should have seen that win, he said. All without any emotion, Joe. All in the same, detached manner Old Man Cady'd have used.

" 'Back in town?' I asked. His smile dazzled you. Yes, and having dinner with his new boss, he said. 'Fine!' I said. 'It's been a long time.'

"He looked at me good and straight. 'Too long,' he said. 'I—I was out of control myself for a while,' he said and anything more was unnecessary, the way he said it. 'Fortunately, though, I was in production,' he said, 'and my new boss seems to think I've kept step.

" 'A man, you know,' he said, 'can't stay down after his dog goes up,' and damn it, I wanted to cheer. 'It was a shock to know I still had what it takes to handle something very hard,' he said. 'So I came into town and sat outside a certain door until they let me in, trying for a shot at the moon and—'

"Just then the doorman comes up; very respectful; most confidential. 'Mr. Cady,' he whispers, 'Mr. Billings asks if you can't come right up!'

"Billings, Joe!" he said, grabbing my shoulder. "Up there where he belongs! In one of the golden chairs! That's why what I tell can't hurt him; can't hurt anybody but a louse and, boy, do I hope it *stings!*"

ILLUSTRATED
BY
JOHN RICHARD FLANAGAN

THE SWORD OF QUALOON

By BARRÉ LYNDON

SYNOPSIS

ALL THROUGH the Middle East, the calm of Moslem peoples has been disrupted by war; the world's traffic, riding down the Suez Canal to Africa and the Orient keeps Port Said swirling with men whose skins are pigmented from white through saffron-brown to black: Greeks, Arabs, French, Chinese, Turks, Somalis. . . . Many are saboteurs and espionage agents. And these are the concern of BOB CUNNINGHAM—known respectfully to the Arabs as "el-Cunningham"—posted here as front man for British Intelligence because of his knowledge of the desert. Cunningham's job is to settle disputes among the natives, forestall tribal warfare, watch for enemy agents and keep the peace in the "wickedest city in the world." In this, he is aided by KAMIL BEY, clever young Egyptian commissioner of police.

Among Cunningham's many worries is the strange case of SARIE, the "Yezidee woman." Unwilling symbol of the hated Yezidee cult, she has been pursued

Yelling natives gave way before Cunningham's truncheon. . . . "Allahu akbar!" shouted the prophet.

from Assuan to Cairo to Port Said by Yezidee dervishes who wish to take her back to the island of Suakin as the *Shaitan sitt*—"wife of Satan." Because of the mark that has been put upon her, the Arab natives believe she has brought them the evils of war. There are rumors, disturbing to Cunningham, that a new prophet—IBN ABDALLAH—has arisen to gather followers to war against the Yezidees. And because Sarie is under the protection of Cunningham, several attempts have been made upon his life. More than one such attempt has been thwarted by his faithful bodyguard—the crippled ABDI. Cunningham's friends are greatly concerned for his safety—the two men with whom he shares quarters: CAPTAIN TWEEDIE, a Britisher, and DOCTOR LARRIMORE, an American who is a member of the staff at the native hospital. And, especially, DOCTOR ANN SOMERSET, an American girl who works with Larrimore, and is in love with Cunningham.

Walking through the market place one day, Cunningham sees an Arab smith forging a sword of strange design—"for killing Yezidees, *effendi*," the smith tells him. Cunningham buys the sword and takes it to PRINCE MIKKI, a handsome Turkish military attaché and admirer of Sarie's. Mikki, a collector of Arab weapons, warns him that it means trouble. Cunningham sends Abdi to Suez to investigate and the cripple leaves his cousin, Omar, to guard his master till his return.

Then a queer figure arrives in Port Said, a slim negro dressed in a ragged

burnoose but speaking in the cultured tones of an Oxford man, CURZON LEE, an agent of the British, to whom he is valuable because he can go anywhere in North Africa without arousing suspicion. Now he has returned from a mission on which Cunningham has sent him into the desert: to investigate the new prophet who calls himself Ibn Abdallah, Son of the Servant of Allah.

When Curzon Lee arrives at Cunningham's headquarters to report, Kamil Bey is there with the Englishman. When the two men question the negro, they learn to their astonishment that he has been converted to the teachings of Ibn Abdallah—the man he had gone to investigate! Kamil Bey suggests they detain him in custody.

PART TWO

CUNNINGHAM did not answer. Kamil had been quicker than himself to appreciate the truth about the negro. He had adopted the Moslem faith because its fatalism offered a salve for his disappointments and rebuffs, and the superstitious beliefs of the Arabs suited him.

There was nothing that Cunningham could do. It would be useless to try and reason with him, and it would serve no purpose to detain him. He could do no harm, but it was pitiful to see him sitting there, thin and tired, deluded, yet very sure of himself. It was better to hear what more he had to say, and then to let him go.

From inside the leather roll he drew out a sheet of tinted paper which bore Arabic characters, written with a reed. He went on, "Nor is the prophet afraid for you to hear the words which he always speaks at sunset." He was speaking directly to Kamil. "You will find that they are as rich as a *sura* from the Koran."

He came to his feet while Cunningham watched, frowning. The negro looked to be sure that he had their attention, then he began to read from the paper.

" 'May Allah defend us from the mischief of weird women, and blacken the faces of all worshippers of Shaitan!' "

"That means Sarie and the Yezidees," Kamil commented.

" 'Let the hands of the *Shaitan sitt* perish, and let all of Suakin perish with her'!"

The negro's voice became resonant, as though he put some quality of the prophet's own tones into what he now read. Cunningham could guess how the words would sound in the stillness of the desert, with a setting sun red on the horizon.

He knew, too, the serious kind of trouble they could rouse in the uneasy Middle East.

" 'We will brand the Yezidees in the nostrils, and they shall be split by the sword'," the negro read, " 'and the *Shaitan sitt* shall die with them!' "

He rolled the paper up and slipped it into his pouch, then stooped for the empty water-bag. As he did so, the muezzin in the native quarter began to call through the evening quiet, "*Allahu akbar!* There is no god but Allah. . . . Come to prayer!" Curzon Lee heard the blind man's voice, and he said, "I want to go to the mosque for the sunset prayer."

He pulled the brown cloth about his bare shoulders, and he had the air of a man who was breaking some last link with the past.

Very strangely, Cunningham felt as though the negro was returning to a world to which he knew he belonged and, Cunningham realized, the man had most scrupulously kept faith with him. That was another reason why he made no attempt to stop Curzon Lee as he moved toward the door.

"The prophet has only a small band of followers, but he has very many believers," Curzon Lee said. "Now I shall join him, wherever he may be."

He paused by the doorway and looked at them in turn, then touched a hand above his heart, to his lips and to his green turban as he bowed.

"*Allah yisallimak.* . . . Allah protect thee," he murmured.

He held Cunningham's gaze for a moment, then went out. The Sudanese watchman salaamed as he crossed the courtyard, from which the sunlight had now gone.

CHAPTER VII

CAMELLIAS—A MAP—AND A SWORD

CURZON LEE'S visit resulted in considerable activity for Cunningham.

Larrimore told Ann that he and Kamil were busy down in the police building, which explained why it was three days before Cunningham telephoned her, ostensibly to inquire about the Arab boy and his glass eye, but also to ask if she would dine with him that evening. He had booked a table at Gaby's, he said. He wanted to send a carriage for her, but she preferred to walk down.

On her way through the town, she could see a smoky-pink moon, low in the misty sky above Lake Menzala. When the moon cleared, rising full and high, it would make a perfect evening for dinner on the terrace at Gaby's, overlooking the quay. Afterwards, Ann hoped, they would ride out along the beach, past the weird native cemeteries and as far as a horse-carriage could go on the sand-spit which, stretching between lake and sea, ended at one of the seven ancient mouths of the Nile.

She walked quickly, keeping to the roadway of the Shari Rameses. No lights showed anywhere and the arcaded sidewalks were very dark, but the shadowy street was alive with flitting figures, the warm air heavy with lingering odors.

Ann wore a creamy camel-hair coat above a cerise and black dress which had come from one of the couturiers along the old Boul' Eugenie; he was a refugee from the Rue de Rivoli. She knew that although the stiff primness of hospital garb has a fascination for men, it also tends to make the wearer seem remote; it was, she felt, just as well to let Bob see that she could be colorful and real.

She knew that he was busy. Curzon Lee's visit had stirred things up; Larrimore had told her about it, having received suitably exaggerated details from Pat Tweedie.

Ann had been to the police building once before, when Cunningham had interviewed her officially on her arrival. Now she made her way from the end of

Prince Mikki

the street, across the yard and past the banana trees, to find the outer room unexpectedly active.

Police were quietly making ready for emergency duty. They had taken rifles from the rack, their *tarbooshes* had been replaced by steel helmets, and the green-eyed Arishi sergeant was issuing ammunition. Sight of them startled her a little, because black men in steel helmets have a peculiar grimness.

Omar, the man whom Abdi had sent to guard Cunningham, was squatting by the inner door. As he opened it for her, his robe slipped away to reveal ridged and slanted scars where a leopard had clawed his shoulder. She entered the silent room beyond, stepping into an atmosphere which she felt was a little tense.

Cylinders of dark parchment shielded the electrics, and black drapes shrouded the windows. Kamil Bey, his back to the doorway, was hunched over a telephone on the littered desk; he wore breeches, and riding boots with small-roweled steel spurs.

Cunningham was working with Tweedie where big sheets of paper had been pinned to one wall. A great map, taking in almost the whole of the Middle East, had been sketched in black crayon and the two were painting red blobs on it, locating them from lists, dipping their brushes into a pot held by a police orderly.

Cunningham had freshly creased

pants, a white shirt and a tie; his shoes were so carefully shined that they looked glazed, and his tanned jaw was fresh from a recent shave. He glanced over his shoulder in the moment that the door-latch clicked, as though he had been listening for it.

His eyes, very gray when the light caught them, widened as he smiled at Ann. He grabbed a chair from behind the desk and started toward her but, before he could speak, Kamil's voice sounded at the telephone.

"Hello, Mikki! If you're not too busy, d'you think you could come down to Bob's office?"

Watching him Cunningham whispered, "Glad you've got here!" and steadied the rickety chair for Ann. Then his attention returned to Kamil, and she noticed that Tweedie held his brush poised as he looked down from the bench on which he stood, listening.

"We'll have something rather interesting to show you by the time you get here," Kamil said, then suddenly covered the mouthpiece, glancing at Cunningham. "He sounds a trifle cautious," he commented, and waved a hand to Ann before he spoke into the telephone again.

"We just want your opinion about something," he said. "It's a little piece of hardware that Sarie is bringing along!" He listened for a few moments. "Thank you very much, Mikki. I'll send a car along at once. Good-bye!" He dropped the receiver onto its rest and signed toward the orderly, who hurried out. "He'll be here in a few minutes," he told Cunningham, then moved to shake hands with Ann.

"I walked straight in," she said. "Was that all right?"

"Of course!" Cunningham laughed. "As a matter of fact, we're going to have quite a party here for a bit. But it won't delay me more than about ten minutes!"

Tweedie called a greeting and waved his red-tipped brush, then went back to his work.

CUNNINGHAM and Kamil stood looking at her, talking, their glances appreciative. Kamil said, "Ann, you look perfectly charming this evening."

She smiled at the compliment, and Cunningham told her, "You're doing me proud!" Then, when she glanced interestedly at the map, he said, "Those red spots show where Yezidees have established themselves."

Blue lines traced caravan routes across the deserts, and she saw that the red blobs were scattered thickly from Mosul to as far south as Aden; the island of Suakin was heavily ringed, and she remembered that this was the home of the Yezidee dervishes.

Cunningham did not explain further about the map. He lifted a little pasteboard box from the desk, and showed her soft, crimson camellias resting against the stiff whiteness of sisal fiber. "I must have guessed what you'd be wearing," he commented.

She was surprised and pleased, because the corsage was altogether unexpected. And she knew that he had not guessed about her dress; he had somehow troubled to find out, because red camellias were not usual.

"Thank you, Bob," she said, and held his smiling gaze while she slipped fingers under the blooms and lifted them gently. It was as she took a red-headed pin from the sisal fiber that Tweedie called abruptly, "All on, Bob!"

He jumped down to the floor, putting aside his brush, and Cunningham said quietly, "Will you excuse me for just a moment, Ann? I want to take a look at this."

He moved around the desk and, standing between Tweedie and Kamil, studied the map. Slowly, he commented, "That doesn't look too healthy, if you ask me!"

"The spots do make it a bit leprous," Tweedie agreed cheerfully. "But it'll show exactly where to patrol, if Ibn Abdallah starts any nonsense."

"We'd need a couple of army corps!" Cunningham answered. "That map covers about two million square miles, mostly desert. We couldn't patrol one percent of it!

"When I was sent up here," he went on reflectively, "they told me in Cairo that the one thing to be avoided was any disorders in the back areas of the Middle East."

"Well, nothing's started yet," Kamil

replied. "Have you told them what Curzon Lee said?"

"They consider that the simplest thing would be to round Ibn Abdallah up, and slap him straight into clink," Cunningham answered.

"That *would* set things alight!" Kamil was startled.

"It'd start fanatics with swords rampaging everywhere!" Cunningham agreed quietly. "It'd make a martyr out of him. We'd have massacres and bloody murder overnight. The idea of the map is that it may help us localize any trouble.

"And there's another thought behind it," he added, slowly. He remained looking up at the red blobs. "If we could clear those Yezidees out, that would prevent any clash."

"Clear them out?" Kamil stared. "Where to?"

"Up to somewhere beyond Mosul. Simply clear them out. A mass evacuation."

"That'd be quite a job!" Tweedie commented.

"I know," Cunningham admitted. "It's only a thought, and the map would show where to find them." Then he added, "Well, we can't do anything more until we know where this prophet is."

"It's a pity Curzon Lee couldn't tell us," Kamil said.

"When's Abdi coming back?" Tweedie asked.

"Any time now." Cunningham still looked at the map. "I spoke to the Sinai Patrol this morning, and they may get some news first. I think, when we do hear, I'd better go down and see Ibn Abdallah, and try to warn him off. For all we know, he may listen to reason."

"He won't," Kamil said flatly. "He's giving out swords!"

"I don't like that," Cunningham admitted. "I don't like that at all!"

He turned, saw that Ann was listening, and told her, "There's an Arab tradition that, some day, a mighty leader will arise, carrying a sword which all men will recognize."

"The sword of Islam!" Kamil cut in.

Cunningham pointed at the map. "And he's supposed to carve all that into one great Moslem empire," he said grimly. He looked at Kamil. "It could be that Ibn Abdallah believes he's the man!"

While he spoke, the Arishi sergeant knocked and came in saluting before he held the door wide for Sarie. She was coming across the outer room, with one of her Nubian watchmen following, and with the steel-helmeted police staring silently as she passed between them.

SHE was dressed for the evening, and a fur wrap hung open from her shoulders. Her gown was long-skirted, with a gold lamé top against which hung splendid beads of lapis lazuli. She had a scarab ornament in her hair, and the Nubian made a magnificent background for her, with his scarlet waistcoat glowing against the blackness of his thick arms and chest.

Her dark-edged eyes were very alive, but they were troubled and she smiled only briefly when Cunningham called, "We've been waiting for you, Sarie!" As she came in, Tweedie lifted a hand to his cap, and Kamil gave her a little salute, while her glance went quickly to Ann.

She said nothing at all. She paused inside the doorway, motioning the negro on toward the desk. He moved ahead and set down a roll of grimy cloth, while the sergeant saluted again and went out.

Tweedie and Kamil and Cunningham watched the negro. He was nervous. His uncertain glance flicked from one to the other as he began to undo the cloth. Sarie spoke then.

"This is the man who killed that Yezidee dervish at my house. I gave him some money as a reward." She pointed. "That's what he bought with it."

The man's fingers were plucking at the cloth. He began to spin it against his palms until the folds fell away, revealing a sword shaped like the one which the smith had been making in the native quarter. But this weapon was finished, edged, with a filigree-like trim where the hilt ran into the brightly polished blade.

They looked at it, bending over the desk, then Kamil said, "This is one of the prophet's swords, all right!"

" 'New and sharp and shining!' " Softly, Cunningham quoted the words that Curzon Lee had used.

"And there is the inscription that I

mentioned when I telephoned you." Sarie moved nearer, pointing with a delicately tinted finger-tip to where stylized Arabic characters were etched amongst the filigree.

The negro backed away from the desk. Cunningham remained gazing down at the sword as he asked, "And your man bought this from the spice trader?"

"Yes, this morning," Sarie answered.

Cunningham nodded slowly, then picked the weapon up. He stepped back and set the wide tip of the blade under the edge of the desk. He pressed strongly on the hilt, so that the sword bent before it suddenly leaped clear, small splinters of wood flying as the blade whipped, ringing.

"Good steel!" Kamil spoke coolly.

"No Arab made it," Cunningham said. "Weapons like this must come from outside the deserts." Then he added, "There's something behind them, all right!"

Kamil nodded. This was something that they had discussed, agreeing on the possibility that subversive interests might be encouraging Ibn Abdallah to start trouble by providing him with these swords.

Once his followers became active against the Yezidees, massacre and riots would follow inevitably. The British would have to use troops to stop the killings. They would then appear as enemies to the fanatical Moslems and, at the same time, they would look like friends of the hated Yezidees, since they would be protecting them. Arabs everywhere would be roused against British authority.

It was easy to imagine that some strategy of this sort was beginning to operate. Night bombers, coming over the sea from Rhodes, constantly pointed the importance of Port Said and the Suez Canal; if they were lost, the British Empire would be cut in half at one stroke. The only overland route to those objectives was across the deserts, and it would be very useful if difficulties and disorders were created before armies came smashing across them.

Only Cunningham doubted whether anything like this could be happening except, perhaps, as a very secondary possibility. The development of such a plan would be too unreliable, much too uncertain for military purposes. He believed that there was something less contrived, something altogether more adventitious behind the swords.

He glanced at the Nubian and asked, in Arabic, "Where did the trader get it?"

"From the hand of Ibn Abdallah himself, O *effendi*," the man said.

Cunningham looked at Kamil. "Then I think your men had better bring that trader in," he suggested.

"I'll send the whole squad out." Kamil started away. "If he sold more than one sword, they can search for the others."

WHEN the door closed behind him, Cunningham slanted the weapon against the light which glistened from the highly polished blade. He lifted the hilt to examine the filigree, and Sarie asked, "Can you read what's there, Bob? It's old Turkish."

The characters were thick, oddly formed and set like a cartouche. Cunningham frowned over them while Sarie stood waiting, watching his face.

She had very real elegance and beauty, but her expression was set and concerned, and Ann marked that she stood with the stiff attitude of one whose nerves are much strained, but still controlled. Her thumbs were buried in her palms, fingers clenched tightly about them.

"I'll tell you what it is," she said abruptly. "It's hard to make out." She waited until Cunningham met her glance. "It stands for 'Swords of Qualoon.'" She went on, "Qualoon was a mameluke king of Egypt." And she put meaning behind her words as she added, "One of Mikki's ancestors!"

Cunningham said easily, "Oh, so Prince Mikki's told you that he comes from a line of kings, has he?"

"Yes. That morning when we went to him with the other sword." Her tone was quick, impatient.

Cunningham smiled, but he made no comment as he stood turning the sword over in his hands, reflected light from the burnished steel flashing across his face. Through the quiet, Ann heard the shuffle

of boots and the clump of rifle-butts as Kamil sent the black police filing away into the darkness.

Pat Tweedie stood at Cunningham's elbow, remaining very quiet, watching Sarie.

She spoke abruptly, stepping nearer the desk. "Don't you think it's a little peculiar that Mikki should collect old swords and ship them away, and then a desert prophet finds copies of them . . . by a miracle!"

Gently, Cunningham lowered the weapon back to the cloth. "This isn't necessarily a copy of any weapon that Mikki ever owned."

"But it's a copy of a mameluke sword, and he knows all about them!" Sarie exclaimed. "It's a kind of ancestral sword to him, and if he pretends that he can't read what's on it, won't that mean something?"

"If he pretends," Cunningham agreed slowly.

"That's what I've been trying to say!" Sarie said sharply.

"Well, we shall see," and Cunningham glanced up as an automobile horn blasted in the near distance. "This should be he!"

Tweedie stepped to the window, looking out past the black drape, peering into the yard. Cunningham wiped a fold of cloth along the bright sword blade and, from the corners of his eyes, he watched Sarie's fingers as they tapped against the desk-top.

"I may be quite wrong about him," she admitted suddenly. "But I thought of him the instant that I saw 'Qualoon' on that thing."

Cunningham continued to polish the sword, and it was a moment or two before he said quietly, "You're a little worked up over all this, aren't you, Sarie?"

"I'm sorry," she answered, "but I feel as though I'm caught between the Yezidees, and this prophet with his swords!"

Cunningham asked quickly, "You weren't afraid that your man would turn against you?" and he glanced at the Nubian.

She shook her head. "You chose him."

"He soldiered in the Sudan, like the others," Cunningham said. "He's all right."

He watched her drumming fingers, then dropped the cloth. "Sarie," he said, and put out a hand stilling her fingers, "don't get scared."

"I'm getting terribly scared," she answered.

Ann saw how her fingers wrapped tightly about Cunningham's, clinging as he moved nearer her. He spoke gently.

"Kamil and I are standing by, with a lot of other people who won't let anything happen." There was encouragement in the very easiness of his quiet voice. "You leave it to us."

She drew a long breath while she looked up at him. "All right, Bob," she said.

"As a matter of fact, I've been wondering if we couldn't shift the Yezidees away entirely." He indicated the map. "Make them move into the mountains, where their towers of Shaitan begin."

"They wouldn't go," she said.

"It'd be a task to round them all up, but if we said they were to go," and he smiled, "they'd go!"

She shook her head. "They'd have to be led, just as Ibn Abdallah is leading his people." She laughed a little. "You'd have to send me ahead of them, then they'd follow!"

He laughed with her. "Well, you stop worrying about it. Let Larry take you to the Divan tonight. Forget it all!"

"You couldn't take me?" She smiled slowly as she held his gaze.

"I'm dining with Ann," he said, then released her hand as a car rolled into the yard outside.

Tweedie called from the window, "Here's Mikki!"

Cunningham remained looking at Sarie a moment, then moved toward the door. Tweedie went out after him.

CHAPTER VIII

THE HANDS OF THE PROPHET

SLOWLY, then, Sarie faced toward Ann, who felt overwhelmingly sorry for her. She did not know Sarie well but, in this moment, she had a warm desire

El-Cunningham

to show her some friendliness. She made a move to come from her chair, but sat back when she met the gaze of Sarie's black-fringed eyes.

There was something very speculative about them, and more than a little challenging.

She stepped a bit nearer, then suddenly bent close and her voice came in a whisper, low and curious in tone.

"Are you very fond of Bob?"

The question completely surprised Ann.

Her quick mind leaped defensively, and she asked in return, "Are you?"

Sarie did not answer at once. She looked from Ann's face to the corsage which she still held, then she spoke very softly.

"I think my life depends on threads which are wearing very thin."

She straightened, turning away. Ann stared at her, wondering just what she meant. Her words sounded like an appeal not to hold Bob's attention at her expense and, somewhere, there seemed almost to be an implication of subtle warning in them.

Ann had no time to think more about it. She heard Prince Mikki's voice in the other room, and she turned to look while she pinned the flowers to her dress.

Mikki wore the long, light-blue cape of the Turkish air force, and it swung as he returned the salutes of Kamil Bey and Tweedie.

"Hello, Bob," he said as he came through the door, stopping short and bowing when he saw Ann and Sarie. "What's this? A party?"

"No, we wanted your opinion about that," and Cunningham pointed toward the desk.

Prince Mikki saw the sword then. He stared for a moment and his glance went to the big Nubian, who had backed against one wall. Mikki looked at the sword once more and moved slowly toward it, while Tweedie came in, and Kamil closed the door as he followed.

Mikki reached with a gloved hand to turn the sword over against its cloth, and Cunningham moved around the desk to face him as the others closed in.

"Is this a finished model of the other one you showed me?" Mikki asked, and his tone was careful.

"More or less," Cunningham answered. "But it didn't come from the same place."

Mikki picked up the weapon then, keeping his fingers away from the sharp edge. Light, falling straight down, flung shadows about his eyes and caught the minute roughnesses on his skin. He bent his head as he turned the blade over and now, with his face entirely shadowed, Ann could see that the width of his cheekbones and the sharp chiselling of his lips lent a faint negroid hint to his features.

"It's mameluke, Mikki," Sarie said softly, and she slipped nearer, watching him, standing stiffly.

"It's a replica of a mameluke sword," he corrected her, then looked at the characters etched by the hilt. He asked, "Can you read this, Bob?"

"Can you?" Cunningham countered quickly.

Mikki did not answer immediately. He was like a man making up his mind. In the end he replied abruptly, "Yes, I can."

He remained gazing down at the Arabic symbols, and when he spoke again his tone was definite, decided.

"This means 'Sword of Qualoon.' The original must have been carried in the army of one of my ancestors!"

He looked up at Cunningham, who said, "Thank you, Mikki. That's what we wanted to know." He caught Sarie's

glance and added, "We wondered if you'd be able to make it out."

Sarie still watched the dark face of the Turkish attaché as he asked, "Where did this come from?"

"Apparently, Ibn Abdallah's followers have them," Cunningham answered tersely.

Kamil asked quietly, "Mikki, why them out of the sand," Cunningham replied.

"By a miracle!" Tweedie.

Mikki lowered the sword back to the cloth, then turned sharply with the others as exclaiming voices sounded from the other room. A thud came on the door, then it opened abruptly, swinging wide.

He was halfway across the room before Cunningham realized he was walking without his crutch.

should they choose to copy that particular sword?"

"It was a common type, and it happens to be a most efficient weapon." Mikki smiled, then said, "This blade has been burnished. I don't think any desert swordsmith could possibly make a weapon as well as this. How do they get them?"

"We're told that the prophet produces

ABDI stood there, wearing tattered, filthy garments instead of the clean *zaboot* in which he had gone to Suez. His eyes were shining. Veins stood out at the sides of his temples and from his throat there came a quivering, excited little laugh as he moved into the room.

He came with his hands spread open, his arms held wide. He was halfway

across the room before Cunningham suddenly realized that the cripple was walking without his crutch.

He was walking upright, limping a little on his left foot, yet moving easily. Back of him showed Omar; the man held his arms out as though he feared that Abdi must fall, his eyes wide in an astonishment which Cunningham and the others shared with him.

They all knew Abdi, and in seven years Cunningham had never seen him move without his iron-tipped crutch, yet now he was walking alone and steadily.

"*Effendi!*" Abdi gestured with both hands toward his left leg. "*Effendi,* I have seen the prophet, and he made me well!" He was trembling, and his hoarse voice rose as he exclaimed, "He put his hands upon me and . . . . *Wallah,* I walk again!"

Larrimore suddenly appeared, pushing aside Omar. "He came to the house first, and I followed him here, Bob. He can walk!" he exclaimed.

"Ibn Abdallah did this?" Cunningham could not believe that.

"*Wayat abuk* . . . . . By the life of thy father, the prophet touched me with his hand!" Abdi gasped.

Ann went to him. The man stood proudly, but sweat was running down his face and chest, and she could see that he was in pain.

Larrimore said, "He must have had a dislocation of the hip, Ann."

"How the dickens could an Arab saddle maker cure him?" Cunningham asked.

"By forcing the joint back into place," Larrimore answered. "He'd probably know a bit about anatomy!"

Ann bent, looking at Abdi's leg. She saw stretched muscles, thin and weak against the thighbone. He could not put his heel to the floor, because the muscles had been atrophied, but the leg was sound in form. Its strength and use would soon return only, just now, wrenched cartilage and stressed sinew were a hot and flaming agony.

"It's a wonderful thing, but how it must be hurting him!" Ann said, and told him, "You shouldn't try to walk!"

"I threw away my crutch, and I came on my feet so that el-Cunningham might see how I walk!" Abdi gestured with quivering hands towards Cunningham. "The pain is nothing, *effendi.*"

Cunningham stepped toward the man, then checked, as Kamil touched his arm.

"Abdi," and Kamil's tone was quick, "where did you see the prophet?"

"He has come out of the deserts. He was by El Kantara."

"El Kantara!" Cunningham stared. That was barely thirty miles away, along the Suez Canal.

Abdi was looking at Sarie as though, now, he noticed her for the first time. His eyes grew wide when his glance went beyond her to the glistening weapon on the desk.

He whispered, "Men say he has swords for the *Shaitan sitt.*"

Sarie drew herself up, and Kamil said sharply, "The Sinai Patrol won't let him get any nearer, Sarie!"

"It's funny they haven't reported him!" Cunningham exclaimed.

While he spoke, a gun-butt crashed on the outer door. The blackout drape swung aside and the Arishi sergeant came stumbling forward. His steel helmet was tilted back, and sweat shone against his dark face as he jerked to attention.

"*Effendi,* Ibn Abdallah comes by boats!" he panted. "He comes across the lake. The prophet is here!"

THROUGH the sharp silence which followed his words came the sound of natives shouting on the street outside, and running footsteps. The telephone bell rang abruptly, and Kamil snatched the receiver, listening to a voice reporting in Arabic which made the diaphragm rattle.

"The men on the sand spits let him through. Their orders were only to stop Yezidees!" Kamil slammed the receiver down and looked at Cunningham. "That was from Kabuti. They say he's got six or seven boats, and he's landing at the quay in the native quarter."

"He'll rouse the whole damn town!" Cunningham exclaimed, but he remained cool. "He must have crossed the canal below El Kantara, and dodged the patrols, but I don't see how he could have got up here without being reported." He

glanced at Ann. "I'm afraid our dinner is off."

"I'll take Abdi to the hospital, and treat his leg," she said.

"Use the police car!" Cunningham's voice was crisp then, and he started for the door. "Come on, Kamil, and you, Pat!" Over his shoulder he called, "Larry, you bring Sarie!"

Mikki shouted as he went, "Can I help?"

"No, thank you," Cunningham answered, then he was running out, and the man with the scarred shoulder was close at his back. The others followed, Mikki going with them. Larrimore caught Sarie's arm and ran her out. Her Nubian guard looked at the sword, then left it where it was.

When he had gone, Ann found herself alone with Abdi.

The man limped to support himself by the desk, and his face was distorted from pain as he stared after Cunningham.

"The prophet came here by the smuggler's way," he said. "He came by El-Balla and across the lake." He spoke Arabic, but Ann knew enough to understand him. "That is why none saw him coming."

He looked at Ann, and went on, "A man asked me how smugglers come to Port Said, and I told him, and he told Ibn Abdallah, so through me he comes here, *effendina!*" He held his burning hip with his free hand as he went on, "And the prophet twisted my leg so that I should not stand at el-Cunningham's back." He snarled, "The curse of Shaitan be with him!"

Ann saw how his mind was working, and she said quickly, "I can make your leg well, Abdi. I'll find men to carry you."

"*Na'am!*" He pushed himself upright. "I was ten times a fool!" He moved toward the door. "I will burn out my fault with pain."

He put weight on his injured leg, and the agony of that brought a strangled noise to his throat, but he went on.

He went on until Ann ran to the outer door and shouted into the movement and activity outside. Then the big Nubian came back and whipped Abdi up in his arms, carrying him to the car.

CHAPTER IX

ALLAHU AKBAR!

THE prophet with a shaved head and varnished skull had come out of the deserts, and some said that he walked across Lake Menzala as though the waters were land.

Such a thing would be easy to him, the Arabs agreed, because he was a worker of miracles. He had touched the crippled leg of el-Cunningham's servant, so that the man could now run like a young goat. And from his own spittle in the sand, Ibn Abdallah had created the shining swords which he brought against the *Shaitan sitt.* He was coming to rid Egypt of the weird woman and all her mischief, and every native in Port Said seemed to know of his arrival.

The streets filled with men hurrying to greet him. No women went, only men: Arabs, Sudanese in store clothes, Berbers and half-naked *fellahin* and blacks, running across town to join excited thousands in the native quarter.

Two Egyptian mounted police also raced across town, clearing a way for Sarie's carriage. Her driver was standing up, using his whip, and her Nubian guards clung desperately at either side of the old victoria as it rocked crazily on flimsy springs. Omar was perched at the back, holding on to the folded top, feet braced on the bucking axle.

Kamil Bey rode ahead of the carriage, mounted men galloped beside it, and Bob Cunningham followed with Pat Tweedie, traveling in a swirl of dust which rose high.

Near Sarie's house, drilled police wheeled their mounts and the driver checked his horses savagely. The carriage stopped by the painted door to the courtyard, but Cunningham pulled wide and rode on, not slowing. He wanted to reach the lake-side quay before Ibn Abdallah had time to speak. Kamil would follow as soon as he had placed the men, and Tweedie was to remain in charge of them.

Cunningham had a glimpse of Larrimore half lifting Sarie to the ground, and he saw the Arishi sergeant's squad run-

ning from a side street as he went at a flat gallop across the Shari Muhammad Ali into the native quarter.

Moonlit buildings threw deep shadows along the narrow roadway and hurrying natives scuttled as he burst around corners, cutting toward the quay. With every block, the natives became thicker on the road.

Cunningham took no police with him, and he was making no show of force. He still hoped that the prophet might be a reasonable man, and that it would be possible to turn him back the way he had come. Ibn Abdallah's experience was only that of the deserts; vilifying Sarie and the Yezidees before a few score Arabs at some oasis was very different from facing aroused thousands at Port Said. The disturbance he was creating might alarm him; as it alarmed Cunningham.

Crowding natives slowed his mount to a trot and, near the quay, they packed up solidly, pressing on toward the market place. Cunningham's police-trained horse went almost sideways into them, jogging with exaggerated steps, forcing a path amongst men who yelled and broke before it.

They were jammed between ramshackle dwellings, which creaked and shook from pressure on their wooden fronts, and white dust rolled like mist in the moonlight. Cunningham was at the edge of the market place when the dust became tinged with a red glow, and he discovered that this came from torches held by men about the lebbek tree, where the native smith worked. They were flaring in spite of blackout regulations which, normally, the natives observed very carefully, because they were terrified of air raids.

RAGGED *marabouts* from the deserts, and green-turbaned followers of the prophet were close around the tree, their flares throwing smoky light across a seething press of natives which stretched away into the gloom. Ibn Abdallah stood there under the tree, white-robed, his polished scalp shining, and Cunningham heard him crying through the noise of the crowd, using strangely rhyming Arabic which had the ring of the Koran itself.

"Allah shall blacken the faces of all Yezidees, and fire shall swallow them up!" His voice was powerful, carrying, and he suddenly lifted both arms as he roared, "*Allahu akbar!*"

His followers repeated the words, leaping, while the prophet spread his arms wide and, red-lit by the torches, tilted his head back as he cried again.

"I bring swords, and all Yezidees shall die!" Once more he voiced the Islamic hosanna, "*Allahu akbar!*"

Turbanned men and *marabouts* followed his call, "*Allahu akbar* . . . . . Allah is most great!" They began to chant it over and over again, swaying, their torches shifting in time with the words. It was as the crowd responded to their lead that Cunningham reached for the truncheon which hung at the back of his saddle.

He leaned outward, cracking at heads and shoulders, drumming heels into the flanks of his horse so that it plunged forward. Something was beginning here which he knew that he must stop, for it appeared that Ibn Abdallah was no humble prophet; he was an aggressive man, glorying in his power.

Yelling natives gave before Cunningham only when they were buffeted by his horse, or felt the smarting clout of his truncheon. Even then they kept on shouting, roused and fervid, and he heard the prophet again, his deep tones vibrant.

"In the deserts and the hills and the valleys between, all Yezidees shall die. And the *Shaitan sitt* shall die with them!"

The crowd answered fiercely. These were Moslems, deep in supersitious hatred of all Yezidees, regarding them as fiends in human form, existing only for evil. Still more did they hate Sarie who, to them, was the wife of Shaitan himself, uncanny with the beauty of creatures painted on murals in tombs of the ancient dead.

Alone, hardly a man dared raise his voice against her, fearing her power; but, led by Ibn Abdallah, they could be whipped to disorders which would set all Port Said ablaze.

Cunningham saw the followers around the tree begin to shift like dervishes starting a *zikr*: a rhythmic movement which, unchecked, would become a frenzied dance. Their moving torches sent up greasy smoke, and through their shrill tones Ibn Abdallah's deep voice came again.

"The Yezidees of Suakin shall die with the weird woman, and all evil shall go from the world!" He flung his hands high, turning his face to the sky. "*Allahu akbar. . . . .!*"

The crowd gestured with him. The roaring and the suddenly lifted arms terrified Cunningham's horse. It bucked, knocking Arabs off their feet, plunging on until he could see the prophet clearly, raised up under the lebbek tree.

He stood on boxes piled about the palm fronds. The ground around was scattered with milk gourds and baskets of fruit, loaves and jars of honey brought to him as hasty gifts. He was big, even for an Arab born in the mountains above Medina. His shaved, glistening scalp was full of creases and folds, he had hairy brows and great strength, and his hands looked huge. He shouted again, but his voice was lost in the noise of the crowd.

Cunningham broke through the shifting circle of followers; they were dressed as Curzon Lee had been, in robes of sandy-brown cloth, and with them were *marabouts* recruited from the deserts, lean fanatics, bearded and ragged. His horse reared when a torch slashed before its eyes and while Cunningham lay against its lathered neck, snagging the bit, he heard men shout as they recognized him, "El-Cunningham!"

The whole crowd could see him in the torchlight. All knew who he was, and their chanting began to fade, while green-turbanned figures darted toward the prophet, pointing back.

Cunningham took his horse on until it was treading palm fronds by the tree. The crowd stilled to muttering silence, surging and peering out of the darkness, watching as "el-Cunningham" faced the prophet. They knew him as a protector of Sarie, and now they would see whether he was greater than this "Son of the Servant of Allah," who claimed to walk in the footsteps of Mahomet.

Ibn Abdallah was staring, sweat on his face, his skull shining. He waited until Cunningham was very near, then he stooped and snatched a heavy-tipped sword from between his feet; the blade was burnished, shining like the one in the police building.

"I bring swords!" He shook the weapon defiantly toward Cunningham, then swung it high above his head. Followers and *marabouts* shrilled, and acclamation sounded in a blast from the crowd as he roared, "*Allahu akbar . . . . .* I come to end the *Shaitan sitt!*"

SARIE bent at a latticed window, staring across the roofs of the native quarter, ash-gray under the moon and barred with shadow. She could hear massed voices, sounding from where a blur of red light touched the trunks and leaves of palms by the market place.

Larrimore stood with her, looking down at mounted police who patrolled the street below. Men of the emergency squad had been posted like sentry groups. Kamil had gone, and Tweedie waited on a corner.

The distant shouting rose again, suddenly violent, and Larrimore said quietly, "Bob'll stop them."

Sarie glanced up. "Bob won't let them get at me, if that's what you mean."

"It's the same thing," he answered.

She shook her head, looking again from the window. She was very tense, standing rigidly, beautiful in the moonlight.

Larrimore had a tautness about his stomach, partly because he expected Arabs soon to come bursting out of the native quarter, but more because he had never seen Sarie as lovely as she was now.

"This is hell for you," he commented, and his face was set as he looked toward the sullen blotch of red. "You don't get a chance to live your own life!"

She glanced at him again, then turned away, and he watched as she went slowly from the window. No lamp burned in this upper room, but moonlight caught the wall tiles and was reflected from mosaic on the smooth floor. It made the gold on her dress gleam where her wrap

had fallen open. When she spoke her tone was calm, for all her tension.

"My only hope is that, somehow, Bób will bring an end to it—before they do!"

"He will," Larrimore said. "And not just as a matter of duty, either."

Sarie guessed what he meant. "Bob's in love with Ann," she answered. "Not with me."

"No?" Larrimore asked and, after a moment, he said, "Well, Ann seems to think you're in love with him."

She stared from the half-light. "Ann might be right, in a way," she said slowly. "I think I could love anyone who would stop all this for me."

"I could stop it for you, Sarie!"

He spoke quickly, because that was a thing he had been wanting to say. He watched her dark eyes widen, but she said nothing.

"I don't know what you think of me," he said quietly. "But I know how I feel about you." After a moment, his voice came again, quick and low. "Sarie, if you'd marry me, no one could keep you here."

He waited, watching her face, and he saw her smile in a way which made his next words come fast, eagerly.

"We could go down to the Cape, and get across to Rio somehow!" he said. "Then—"

She moved slowly toward him, smiling still, studying his face. When she spoke, it was in half a whisper.

"Aren't you waiting word to go east?"

"I don't have to go."

"But I know you feel that you should. And you told me that they're short of doctors."

"Not my sort of doctor." He smiled a little.

"Perhaps you're better than you think."

She looked at him for a long moment, almost as though she had never been completely aware of him until now.

"We could go," she said quietly, "but that wouldn't end this. They'd still look for me, Larry." Her smile faded. "Bob may have some plan to settle it all. If I went, I might upset that." That was an excuse, and he knew it but, before he could answer, she put a hand on his arm. "And you don't belong in this." She shook her head. "You come from outside, Larry. You're like everyone who comes to Port Said. You're just passing through!"

"Bob isn't, eh?"

She did not answer. Instead she said, "And when you live in Egypt, you come to believe in fate. I begin to think I know mine." She dropped her hand. "If I tried to escape it, I might only bring disaster to you."

"I'd chance that," he said quickly.

"Things have to work themselves out." She moved again to the lattice, said quietly, "Thank you, Larry," then bent to listen to the deeper and more formidable sound which now came from where the glare showed among the rooftops.

THE prophet made an astonishing figure under the lebbek tree, his sword flashing in a red arc against the gray-green leaves; his polished head gleaming as he swayed, shouting like a dervish, "Allah . . . Allah . . . Allah . . . !"

That was the ultimate cry before a *zikr* began. *Marabouts* and followers chanted with him, their voices pitched high and thin against the full-mouthed roaring of the crowd. Some threw handfuls of powdered herbs onto their torches, which gushed sparks and blazed up, filling the air with an incense-like odor.

Men pressed between the prophet and Cunningham and, for just a moment, he sat raging. He had come without arms or police, expecting Ibn Abdallah to show him at least some measure of Arab courtesy. But the saddle maker from Medina was very sure of himself, blatant in his defiance; the only way to deal with him was to get him off the pile of palm-fronds, and break his hold on the crowd before it became too secure.

Followers were pushing at Cunningham's horse, trying to turn it away. He used his long truncheon against them, and started to dismount, just as a yelling *marabout* slapped a torch at the horse's head. The animal reared high, wall-eyed from terror, its forelock singed and momentarily burning. Cunningham jumped clear as the horse heeled backwards and, toppling sideways, slammed down.

He started toward the tree but men blocked him, chanting steadily, "Allah . . . Allah . . . Allah!" He jabbed furiously with his truncheon, trying to break through. Even in their excitement, the men dared not lift their hands against "el-Cunningham," but they used their torches to drive him back. Sparks flew wide as he tried to knock them away, then wads of burning tow flamed almost in his face.

He ducked aside, only to meet more torches. Their smoke smarted in his eyes, half blinding him, and he realized that he should have remained on his horse. He glimpsed the animal coming to its feet again and it was turning crazily, trampling gourds and baskets.

He found a stirrup iron and swung himself up. He used one hand to keep the horse circling amongst yelling men, while he knuckled his streaming eyes, preparing to charge straight through to the prophet. When he was able to see clearly again he found himself facing the crowd and, through an upheaval of struggling natives, he sighted Kamil coming toward him, lashing out with his bone-handled riding crop, his mount plunging and bucking as he used spurs again and again.

Cunningham headed his own horse into the crowd, and met Kamil a score of yards from the tree. Both wheeled, clearing a space. Kamil's eyes were glinting, because violence in any form stirred him, and his voice was quick as he called, "Bob, I'll go back and get some men!"

"There aren't enough police in the town to hold this lot!"

"I'll telephone for troops!" Kamil exclaimed and Cunningham shouted, "No!"

Inevitably, troops would mean shooting, wounds and death; that would be blamed on the evil influence of the Yezidees and then, as fast as word could spread, the red spots on the map in the police building would mark sites for bloody and revengeful murders.

"We've got to break them up." Cunningham wiped at his eyes again. "Ride down to the quay! Turn in an air raid alarm."

Kamil laughed abruptly. "That'll do it!" He pulled his horse up on its haunches, jabbed spurs home and charged recklessly away through the crowd.

AT the first note of an alarm, the natives always dashed for shelter; they had learned that bombers usually came in from the sea within seconds after the sirens sounded. But Cunningham was not sure that they would run now. Their chant was rising higher, growing faster in its rhythm, stimulating an excitement which could find relief only in violent movement. The start of this came as Kamil went away.

Ibn Abdallah threw his arms wide and his powerful voice sounded, "*Ya, huwa!*" His followers stopped chanting, and the prophet cried again, his face upturned, "*Ya huwa!*"

The cry was a sign that he now felt himself inspired by a mighty presence, invoked by the chanting. The crowd silenced as he called a third time, tremendously, "*Ya-a, huwa* . . . . Oh-h him!" Then he shook his sword high and roared, "*Allahu akbar!*" before he leaped down from the pile.

His action roused a concerted shout and swords, drawn from where they had been hidden under robes, showed among the torches. Followers and *marabouts* rushed to surround the prophet as he started toward the town. The chant began again but now it was in a sharp, accented monotone, "Al-*lah* . . . Al-*lah* . . . Al-*lah* . . . *l*" without break and without any pause.

The crowd shifted, surging as it started to follow while, here and there, an Arab shrilled, "*Ya, huwa!*" and flung his arms upward in imitation of the prophet, then struggled to join those who were near him. Men made way for these; more and more would follow until Ibn Abdallah was leading a phalanx which would remain with him for as long as he kept moving.

Cunningham saw that nothing ordinary would check them now. The faces about him were like beaten bronze in the moonlight, tongues rising and falling in mouths which remained rigidly open, because the chant was one that needed

no slightest movement with the lips.

He turned after Kamil, using his truncheon again, cursing in Arabic as he rode through a tide of swarming men. The natives broke before him, and he was near buildings at the market's edge when air-raid sirens screamed in the town. The sound rushed like a wave through the night, taken up by others until nearer sirens were wailing in the native quarter and by the quay.

Their warning cut through the chant, quenching it. The mob checked. The sirens lifted to their first shrilling peak of sound, then the crowd suddenly lost all cohesion and men were pushing in every direction, yelling, struggling to get away and under cover.

Those around Cunningham swirled wildly, then made a rush for the street leading to the quay. Their pressure carried his horse forward and, on the corner, he saw Kamil jammed against a housefront. He had lost his *tarboosh* and his black hair was flying as he used his hunting crop, trying to break the solidly moving mass of men and pull his mount clear.

Cunningham worked toward him. The Egyptian saw him coming. "Bob, the alarm went before I got halfway to the quay!" He shouted through the screech of sirens. "It's the real thing!"

They came together as the high-pitched note of anti-aircraft guns slapped nervously from the far side of the town. Others followed, shooting from the little park by the jetty and from Port Fuad, across the harbor. A battery came into action near the cemeteries and its fast, blue-white flashes outlined black rooftops.

Sound of the guns set natives thrusting wildly, so that the horses were pinned against the wall. Cunningham saw shell-bursts flicking in the sky, out above the long breakwaters, and saw the market place clearing. He called, "This couldn't have been better if we'd ordered it!"

THE prophet was still moving on, and his followers were chanting steadily through the wail of sirens. "Al-*lah* . . . Al-*lah* . . . Al-*lah* . . . !" The shifting of their smoking torches, and the glint of jerking swords, kept time with their voices. They were making for a street which led into the town and Cunningham said, "Let's try and get him now. Come on!"

They had to fight their way from the wall, but the press of natives soon thinned. They broke clear as the first bombs dropped in a series of clanging explosions somewhere by the harbor, then others fell much nearer, aimed at the railroad depot, their blasts throwing light which struck between buildings and across the market place. It was scattered with fallen turbans and torn robes, and there were limping stragglers who had been hurt in the rush.

Cunningham and Kamil skirted the open space, galloping to head off the prophet. They pulled up a little distance in front of him and he saw them, but he did not check. He stood out against a background of torches and brandished swords, and there were a couple of hundred men behind him. He came on, chanting still, while a bomb burst at the end of a street which led to the bathing beach.

It fell less than a quarter-mile away. Its bright blast sent a flood of light to the market place, then the glare changed to lurid red as the flame mushroomed and became lost in the black of flying sand. Ibn Abdallah's followers faltered when they felt the rush of the concussion, and Cunningham heard the close whistle of another bomb.

He ducked in the saddle, and the blast came from the far side of the market place. Its flash ripped upwards in a fount of dark debris, while volleying smoke rolled and remained luminous against the sky even when the blast was over.

He was all but thrown as his horse tried to bolt, while a third bomb in the stick pitched at the edge of the lake, just beyond the buildings, and more stepped out across the water, flashing as they burst where the lake was shallow.

When Cunningham regained control, he heard green-turbanned men shouting to the prophet that the *Shaitan sitt* was bringing evil on them out of the night. They were dropping their torches, start-

ing to run, pushing about Ibn Abdallah, while through the odor of incense from the torches came the harsh reek of explosives.

"It is the smell of hell!" a man yelled, and the prophet ran then.

Cunningham saw that the man who had shouted was Curzon Lee. Until that moment, he had almost forgotten the negro. He called his name, riding at him, and, as he came close, he saw the prophet turn his head. "Stay in your deserts, O Ibn Abdallah!" Cunningham shouted.

He could see that it would be impossible to get at the prophet now; he was hemmed in by running men, and Cunningham had no defense against their swords if they used them. But he wheeled his horse to cut the negro out of the crowd.

The man was lit by a torch which he still held. He threw it away and tried to dodge, but Kamil had seen him and he came up from one side, leaning from the saddle to catch him by one shoulder. Cunningham swung to the ground.

"We're not going to hurt you!" He grabbed the struggling negro.

Curzon Lee's eyes were starting and wild. He fought to get away, until Kamil dismounted and helped to hold his arms. He was dressed as Cunningham had last seen him and, whatever he might once have been, the negro appeared no different from the rest of the prophet's followers now. He was quivering, straining to escape and, from the fear on his face, he might have shared their dread of the *Shaitan sitt*.

"How does Ibn Abdallah get these swords?" Cunningham demanded.

"They grow in the sand where he spits," the negro panted.

Those were strange words to hear in his cultured tones, and Cunningham humored him. "Where did the prophet last spit?"

"At Bir Mahadat," Curzon Lee said.

"In Sinai?" Cunningham asked. "And before that?"

"At Tur and Ziba," and the negro began to struggle furiously, looking after the others as they ran.

"Let him go," Cunningham said. "That's all I want to know!"

"We're not going to hurt you!" He grabbed the struggling negro.

HE watched with Kamil as Curzon Lee darted away, running through the light of buildings which had begun to burn at the far side of the market.

The sirens had stopped. No more bombs were falling in the town, but batteries were still slamming as the machines flew along the Suez Canal, dropping bombs in an effort to blow in its banks.

"Bir Mahadat, Tur and Ziba," Cunningham said. "We'll go into that, Kamil."

Mentally, he located the places on the map; one was on the Sinai peninsula, and the others were in Arabia. All were within reach of the ancient caravan route which came down out of Syria.

"Let's see Ibn Abdallah off," he said, and they remounted.

He bent in the saddle, patting his horse, trying to soothe it; the animal trembled, shying at everything as they went across the market place. Kamil's horse cavorted, hard to handle, and he tried to master it with crop and spurs, because that was his nature.

No natives were in sight when they trotted along the short street to the quay; none would appear until the "All clear" was given, and that would not come for a long while. Raids were usually brief but sometimes, if the machines were driven off from El Kantara and Ismailia to the south, they flew back up the canal instead of going homeward across the Sinai desert. Then they would unload everything in Port Said, because the town and harbor made a compact target under the moon.

The light from burning buildings caught the slanting spars and bundled sails of boats by the quay. The prophet's followers had boarded some, and were already poling them away.

"They won't come back," Kamil said.

The near guns had silenced, and the night became very quiet. The noise of trucks, bringing out crews to fight the fires, sounded from streets behind the quay, making a muffled background to the splutter and crackle of burning woodwork where buildings flamed about the bomb crater by the market place.

Cunningham became aware of faces watching from the doorways of dark buildings about the little quay, and heads were raised from the very-shallow shelter trenches at one side. They could see Ibn Abdallah standing in one of the boats, looking back across the red-lit water. His sword flashed as he lifted it, his polished skull gleamed and his strong voice came loudly out of the quiet, shouting, "*Allahu akbar!*"

His followers responded. The words were repeated from the darkness beyond the quay, caught and echoed by men sheltering further away. It was as though Moslems all across Port Said heard, and cried out to the departing prophet.

Kamil laughed a little. "They'll have a lot of respect for Sarie's power after this!"

"But it'll work the wrong way," Cunningham said.

Tales would carry wide that Sarie had called evil agents from the night against Ibn Abdallah, bringing fire and the stink of hell, as though she controlled the very elements of war and threw them against him.

The stories would gain as they spread across the deserts, full proof of the prophet's word that there could be no peace until the Yezidee dervishes at Suakin were destroyed, and the *Shaitan sitt* with them.

Cunningham knew that, and he knew that Sarie would realize it, too.

CHAPTER X

GOOD-BYE, MIKKI

THE native smith never again worked under the lebbek tree in the market place, because Ibn Abdallah had hallowed it. The sick tied pieces of colored cloth and lengths of bright silk to its branches as votive offerings. The palm fronds, over which the prophet had walked, were impounded by a local *marabout*.

He laid the foundations of a fortune by mixing their fragments with coriander seed and balsam and yellow-dyed salt; he baked this into little cakes on which he scratched, "In the name of the Prophet," selling them as a cure-all.

Ibn Abdallah went south.

Men said that he was going back to the deserts, where he would gather strength before he returned against the *Shaitan sitt,* because her power for evil was very great, and she would not easily be overcome.

The prophet followed the canal through the arid land of Goshen, and down past the Bitter Lakes all the way to Suez, where he and those with him boarded Arab *dhows,* sailing toward the Red Sea.

Police patrols watched until he sailed, reporting daily to Cunningham, stressing a growing rumor among Arabs that the British wanted to kill the prophet to save Sarie. Cunningham did not like the sound of that rumor, and it was very far from the truth. To shoot the prophet would be to make him a martyr, and that could precipitate a *jihad*—a holy war—against both Yezidees and British authority.

He felt that something other than fanatical belief was urging the prophet on, and that the secret lay behind the copied swords of Qualoon. He learned nothing from the spice trader, and he requested the Sinai patrol to report on all recent caravan traffic to Bir Mahadat and Tur and Ziba, where swords had been found, and to search everything then moving on the peninsula. Also, he talked to the intelligence department at Cairo, discussing Prince Mikki.

By the time that the prophet's *dhows* were nosing through the Strait of Jubal into the Red Sea, the Sinai patrol had

In the heart of each bundle of sponges were swords—greased and shining.

produced results. Cunningham examined these as he sat by the broken fountain in the courtyard of his house, where the locust trees threw late-afternoon shade.

A sergeant and three men of the Sinai police stood near; they wore smooth-sided turbans and tunic shirts which came almost to their knees; they had bandoleers and short Lee-Enfield rifles, and all bore a thin film of the peninsula's camel-colored sand.

The sergeant was a tough Nakhl tribesman, broad-faced and mustached, his skin a coppery red; he was proud, pleased to see "el-Cunningham" again, and he stood to attention beside his men, who carried their rifles at the slope, guarding two Arabs. The pair squatted on their heels, each with the hood of his burnoose shading his bearded face; they sat motionless, watching Cunningham while he went through the report which the sergeant had brought.

The Arabs had been caught on the far side of the Sinai plateau, and rushed across to Port Said on an old six-wheeled desert truck. Four bundles had come with them, taken from their camels, and they lay opened against the red tiles. They contained soft, cup-shaped sponges fished from the Syrian coast, hard packs of Latakia tobacco leaf, and in the heart of each bundle there had been new swords, intended for the prophet. The weapons now lay against their wrappings; thirty in all, greased and shining.

Abdi sat in the sun beside them, eating sweet little grapes; he wore only a pair of old shorts which Cunningham had given him, and a little felt cap. His leg was almost normal now; both Larrimore and Ann had given it a good deal of attention, interested in the astonishing cure.

CUNNINGHAM had twice dined with Ann since the raid and he was troubled because, it seemed, she might soon be going east with Larrimore, who had grown oddly quiet in the past few days. He had suddenly decided to ship out of Suez for Australia, and contact an American ambulance unit from there.

Cunningham imagined that this was because he had grown very fond of Sarie and, apparently, finding that it could come to nothing, had determined to get out. He had not said anything, but he did not go so often to the Manhattan Divan.

If Larrimore left, Cunningham was sure that Ann would go with him. She had trained to fit herself for a career in ophthalmic surgery and, without doubt, there were men who needed her skill behind the war zones of the Pacific.

He tried to find arguments which might induce her to remain in Port Said, but he never put them to her; he was diffident because he realized that he had little to offer Ann. His future would be passed in arid, forsaken places of the Middle East, unless he achieved a governorship somewhere; that might not be for a long time, and even then life would be under conditions very remote from the sort of thing that she had known.

He thought it all out. He even visualized the possibility that, if they went east together, Ann might marry Larrimore. In many ways, they were suited to one another. They had the same interests. They would settle down in Philadelphia, or Boston, or somewhere like that, and Port Said would soon become a memory.

Although he knew that existing circumstances were all against it, Cunningham thought that it would be very exciting for Larrimore to marry Sarie, and himself to marry Ann. Regarded academically, it meant that quite different sorts of people would be coming together, and it was that kind of thing which made the world move. Only it involved a lot of adjustment and, perhaps, a certain amount of courage.

He tried to be as logical as he could about it and, always, there remained an impulse simply to tell Ann that he was enormously in love with her, and to see what happened then.

He was concerned, in a different way, about Sarie. She was trapped between the Yezidees and Ibn Abdallah, and he could find no solution to her problem. He hoped that he would discover one when he knew all the elements behind the desert prophet, but there was much about him which Cunningham did not understand.

Every report said that, apart from his clamor against the Yezidees, Ibn Abdallah taught only the good of the Koran. This made him look like the long-awaited prophet of the Moslems, and he was certainly the Arab ideal of a vigorous leader. Following peaceful ways, he might have welded them together, becoming a man with whom the authorities could treat. Cunningham had always wanted to see the rise of a man like that.

As it was, Ibn Abdallah seemed to think that he was carrying the traditional sword of Islam and, apparently, he had every intention of using it. Cairo still wanted him put in jail, but Cunningham knew that this would have about the same effect as shooting him. Since he advised against it, he was given to understand that any further developments would be regarded as his responsibility. He welcomed this because it meant that, at the proper time, he could request full freedom of action.

Whether the prophet was shot or jailed or allowed to continue his way, he was going to produce a climax very soon. Cunningham was uneasy about that, since he had no means of determining how or where it might arise. He was also troubled over Ann and concerned about Sarie. These things put him in the temper for drastic activity, and he hoped to find opportunity for it in the Sinai report. But he discovered little really useful information.

HE was near the end of the rough typescript when Kamil strolled in from the street; at once, Abdi slipped away to prepare sundowners. Kamil wore riding breeches and a white tunic. He lifted a hand to his cherry-red *tarboosh* in acknowledgement of the sergeant's smart salute then called, "Mikki just telephoned me, Bob." Cunningham looked up sharply. "He was a bit mysterious," Kamil went on. "He said that he wants to see us." He watched Cunningham's lips stretch in an odd little smile. "I told him we'd be here."

Cunningham said shortly, "I think I know what he wants," then turned to the last page of the report.

Kamil moved toward the opened bundles and, regretfully, the Arabs watched him approach. They knew that he would confiscate their goods; first, however, Kamil wanted a couple of the light-colored sponges for himself, and he began to sort them over.

He had read the report when the sergeant first arrived. The Arabs were professional smugglers and, resigned about being caught, they had talked quite freely to the Sinai police; Cunningham had yet to question them and determine how much they had lied.

The man said that they had come down from Lebanon, sent by a Syrian in Beirut. They were to find the prophet, set the swords point downward in the sand at some place near his camp, then secretly tell him where they were hidden. As payment, they were to keep the tobacco and sponges which concealed the weapons.

The only reason they had not followed their natural instinct to steal the camel-loads at the outset, throwing the swords away, was because this would have brought curses upon them from Ibn Abdallah; they were sufficiently good Moslems to prefer his blessing.

Both knew that, at various times, other men had been sent out with swords, but they did not know how the Syrian himself obtained them. Cunningham intended to have this man arrested, if he could be found, when the source of the swords would probably be disclosed. There was, however, an equal probability that so much would have happened in the meantime that the information would then be of little practical value.

Cunningham was at the end of the report when Kamil exclaimed, "Here comes Mikki!"

A car was approaching along the Shari Rameses, its burbling exhaust-note marking it as the French-blue Bugatti roadster owned by Prince Mikki, the only car of its kind in Port Said.

Cunningham jerked upright, stepping to the swords. "Since he's coming here, it won't do any harm to let him have a look at these!" He kicked at the wrappings, uncovering more of the greased and shining blades. "It's about time we let him know we're not completely ruddy fools!"

Kamil nodded approvingly, even though he was a little startled at Cunningham's abruptness. "He knows something," he said.

"It sticks out a mile," Cunningham answered angrily. "'Sword of Qualoon' . . . Sword of Islam. That's not accidental!"

The sergeant was using a sandalled foot to prod the two Arabs upright, now that Cunningham was standing. The roaring of the car began to ease as it rolled up to the house.

"Mikki's a bit of an opportunist," Kamil suggested. "And he's got big ideas about himself."

"He might be sowing the seed for some sort of young pretender movement after the war," Cunningham told him. "In that case, he's only being a damned nuisance!" They heard the car stop and he added, "It may not be a bad idea to give him a little to think about, before he goes."

"Before he goes?" Kamil repeated quickly.

"You'll see," and Cunningham's voice had bite to it. "Things have been happening!"

Kamil was holding a sponge in either hand, and he tossed them aside as he turned to look along the courtyard. All view of the street was cut off by an angle of wall, built to ensure privacy for the one-time owner of the old house. The bricks were red-brown, forming a warm-colored background for Prince Mikki when he stepped around the turn, stopping short as he saw the courtyard full of men.

MIKKI wore a light-blue cape over the darker blue of his uniform; this was unusual, because he generally wore the cape only in the evenings. The shiny visor of his white-topped cap made a hard edge behind which his eyes were troubled, watchful.

"Am I interrupting something?" he asked, then came on when Cunningham shook his head. "I looked in to say good-bye," Mikki added. "I've just been recalled to Ankara."

Kamil glanced quickly, but Cunningham was watching the Turkish attaché as he came around the broken bowl of the fountain.

"I'm driving down to Cairo to pay my respects." He pulled off a pair of loose driving gloves with sharp movements which showed his disquiet. "And I'll be flying up to Ankara in the morning."

"As a matter of fact"—Cunningham's voice was easy—"I was advised that you'd be leaving today, or tomorrow."

Prince Mikki might not have heard him, because he noticed the swords. He looked from them to the Arabs, who regarded him indifferently. He made his tone curiously amused as he flicked his gloves toward the pile of weapons and oily cloth and asked, "Where did they come from?"

"These men were smuggling them across Sinai," Kamil said.

"They look very like the one you showed me," Mikki commented.

It seemed to Cunningham that the Turk had the contrived manner of a man who was dissembling. He waited until Mikki looked up before he said, "They are like it, aren't they?" Then he added, "Shall we have a drink?"

They went through the arched doorway into the cool, shadowy room beyond. Jalousies made dark bars against the sunshine outside and, where one had broken, reflected light struck up to the cobwebbed, painted beams in the ceiling. Tweedie was sitting on the divan, his left sleeve pushed to the shoulder, and his arm jerking under the massaging hands of a native orderly.

Larrimore sent the man over every afternoon, because he believed that, in time and with massage, it would be possible for Tweedie to straighten his damaged arm. It was painful, and Tweedie hated it, but the treatment was having good effect.

He stood up as Prince Mikki came in, his heels noisy against the loose mosaic on the floor. Kamil pulled one of the wooden chairs forward. Cunningham went to where Abdi had set a bottle of Scotch, seltzer siphon and glasses on the old tin trunk.

"How's the arm?" Mikki asked.

"Pretty good." Tweedie extended his hand, trying to force the arm straight; his fingers quivered from the effort, and

the scarred elbow hurt. "It's coming along," he said.

Cunningham called, "Whiskey and soda, Mikki?"

"Please," Mikki answered, then told Tweedie, "I'm just leaving for Ankara. Recalled."

"You are?" Tweedie was surprised. "Why?"

"Frankly, I don't know." Mikki's faint smile was uncertain, and Tweedie thought he could understand that. As an army man himself, he could appreciate that a military attaché would be very worried if he did not know the reasons for his recall.

"Well, it's not surprising, you know." He was aware that Mikki looked at him sharply. "I mean, not with the way the war's going."

He took a cloth from the orderly and waved the man outside, then began to wipe his arm, catching Kamil's glance. There was a hint of warning in it, the Egyptian's dark features were always very expressive.

Mikki stood watching while Cunningham poured Scotch, and squirted seltzer water. Tweedie made conversation.

"You're off right away?" he asked, and Mikki nodded. "Then this is a sort of stirrup cup, eh?"

Mikki nodded again. Kamil passed filled glasses and Cunningham straightened, raising his own.

"Well," he said, "pleasant trip!"

"Thank you," Mikki answered.

Tweedie murmured, "Skin off your nose!"

THEY drank together. Kamil dropped onto a stool and Tweedie backed to the divan, sitting down as Cunningham said suddenly, "I suppose you wonder why you're being recalled."

Mikki regarded him for a moment, then said slowly, "I wondered if, perhaps, you might know."

"Well, I don't," Cunningham replied easily, "but they may have been asking questions from Cairo." He motioned to where the weapons glistened beyond the arched doorway and added, "They may have asked how it is that those things are copies of your ancestral sword."

"But they're not!" Mikki smiled. He half emptied his glass, then laughed as he set it down on the seat of the chair. "There are plenty of those old swords about."

"It may not be just the swords." Cunningham's voice had a sharpness which made Mikki look up. "You see, we know that you're a grandson of the Mahdi."

Mikki straightened abruptly. His head tilted, and he asked softly, "What did you say?"

"I said, you're a grandson of the Mahdi." Cunningham's tone was deliberate. "The Nubian who once led a rebellion in the Sudan."

Mikki stiffened under his cape, staring like a man who was unsure of what he heard.

"He was poisoned by an Arab woman. She stole jewels which he'd looted, then went north and married a Turk," Cunningham said.

Mikki's underlip drew in and his head tilted still more, while his eyes narrowed from the fury growing inside him as Cunningham added, "She bore a son by the Mahdi. He was your father."

"My father was Turkish." Mikki's answer was harsh, clipped. "My grandmother never had a son to the Mahdi, and she was not Arab!"

The assertion that he had Nubian blood cracked his deep conceit, and anger drained the color from his face.

His voice lifted. "I should like to make that very clear, Cunningham!" He stood with both hands pulling at his rolled gloves. "If that information comes to you from Cairo," he said, "then British intelligence is mistaken."

"Is it?" Cunningham replied quietly.

He knew that there was no error in the dossier on Prince Mikki. It noted how the Mahdi's jewels had enriched the Turkish family. It indicated that Mikki's title was assumed from some maternal link with the Phanariote Greeks. It said, further, that his claim to descent from the mameluke kings was very frail and uncertain.

"My father came from a line of janissaries, and my mother was Greek," he began.

"Need we go into details?" Cunningham asked.

Mikki's expression became utterly malevolent.

Cunningham knew that, after this, he would never return to Port Said. And if he had been engaged in some design of his own, this would either scare him from it or force his hand. Cunningham did not much care which way it went. He had said all that he wanted to say; the only thing left was to give Mikki an opportunity to get away.

"I was just telling you the possible reason why you may have been recalled," he said easily. He drank a little from his glass and then, turning to set it down, glanced back as he added, "I hope you don't feel offended."

"Not at all." The words were thick in Mikki's throat, and he repeated them. "Not at all!"

He glanced at Kemil Bey and Tweedie. Both stood up. Kamil had a curious little smile, because he had always disliked Prince Mikki.

He looked at them for a long moment, then moved sharply toward the doorway. He paused as he approached Cunningham, then suddenly walked on and out through the arch. The curtains of hanging cords swung behind him, and they heard the smack of the sergeant's hand on his rifle-butt, saluting as Mikki went across the courtyard.

Tweedie said softly, "He's as mad as the very devil, and he hates everything about us."

"Shut up!" Cunningham told him curtly, and listened as the Bugatti's motor started. The car went off, its exhaust note violent. The sound died as the machine turned a corner, then the roaring came again.

"He hasn't gone out to the canal road!" Cunningham exclaimed.

"No, he went up the Shari Farouk." Kamil looked at him. "There's nothing in that direction," he added, "except Sarie!"

"He might have ideas about saying good-bye to her." Cunningham moved quickly to the telephone by the divan. "I'll let her know!" He lifted the receiver. "She's a little afraid of him."

Kamil smiled. "I think Sarie can look after herself quite well, where Mikki's concerned," he said.

CHAPTER XI

GENTLE—BUT WITH STRENGTH

SARIE leaned forward on the narrow wooden bench. "I want a perfume which a man will always remember," she said.

The old *attâr* nodded slowly.

"I want it to have a little of many odors." Sarie spoke in Arabic. "It must have a perfume of its own, and yet have distinct scents for the memory. You understand how I mean?"

The old man nodded again, looking up at her. She had a red scarf over her hair, tied there against the dust of the street, and she wore a white dress with red at the front of it and at her wrists. She looked very slim, and elegant.

Her voice was low. "When he smells a rose, he will remember. Or it may be some other woman's perfume that will remind him. Only it should be subtle, so that he will have to think before he can remember."

Once more the old *attâr* nodded.

He sat on a pile of mats beside a wide worktable which held many greasy glass vials, and odd-shaped little stone jars that were tightly corked and sealed. The walls were shelved to the roof, stacked with bundles of herbs, bottled drugs, locked tins, jars of seeds and nuts. In a corner were jutting pegs from which hung half-made candles of colored wax.

The small shop was made mellow by late sunshine, striking through the lattice of the only window. The place was barely half a block from Sarie's house and two of her Nubians were outside the narrow door, sitting on the sidewalk, waiting.

Above them was an old sign: *Girgis el-Kahireh,* with Arabic characters under it and then *George of Cairo,* and below this again, *Parfums. Chemist.*

The *attâr* was a Copt, purely Egyptian, or he would have been afraid to allow Sarie in his shop. He wore a loose white turban and he was a small man, with fine hands. He had a neat beard, curling and gray, and his eyes were jet, shaped like Sarie's; his skin had been as fair as her own but now, because he was aged, it was much wrinkled and dry, and

a little yellowed. They were of the same race, and he respected her because he knew her family, and its ties with the past.

He traded in drugs and salves and candles for mosques, but his art was the making of perfumes. He listened thoughtfully to Sarie, knowing that she was asking an impossible thing but knowing, also, that he could please her in part. Or by some chance, in an art where chance is always a great element, he might create just what she asked. A supreme fragrance, which would contain in itself all other scents, was a dream of old Araby.

"All his life, I want him to remember me by this perfume," Sarie said. "It is not to make him come back, only to make him remember." She added, "I shall use it once, Girgis, but never again, after he has gone."

The old man murmured, "You wish that he should remember you through many things." She nodded, and he went on, "Even, perhaps, when the air is wet after rains, and draws scents out of the ground." He said thoughtfully, "Ambergris. That is sweet and earthy."

"And attar of roses," Sarie suggested.

"I have oil of Persian roses. That is best." He reached out to touch a small, lead-lined caddy, brightly colored and heavily sealed because it contained Tongking musk. "And a grain of this, because musk is in many perfumes."

He put his elbows on his knees and drew his fingers through his beard, thinking. Sarie waited. When he did not speak, she said quietly, "You have made perfumes all your life." He smiled. "Let this one crown them all because, for him, the memory will be the only thing left of me."

He looked up again, wrinkles crowding about his eyes as he held her gaze. In the past, he had made perfumes for tourists and for the stores in the town, but she knew that he had an ability above such demands. He revealed his understanding of his art now.

"Listen, O lady Zahra-Kheta," he said, and lifted a slim glass rod from the wide shelf, turning it in his hands. "There is music in perfumes. A good one is like a chord in which notes are well blended. How should this be?" he asked. "Soft and sweet? Or something that is quick and strong?"

"Gentle," Sarie answered, "and subtle, but with its own strength."

"Like love?" and he smiled again.

"Like love," she agreed frankly.

He tapped the glass rod against a thumbnail, and he had almost the manner of a physician as he said, "I should know the kind of man. They are not alike."

WHILE he spoke a car roared past, slowing. Sarie glanced out with him, and recognized the machine as Prince Mikki's. The old *attâr* pointed after it and began, "Now, if it were that *Turki ghamik*."

"It is not for him!" and Sarie stared at the old man. It was the first time that she had heard Prince Mikki called a *Turki ghamik* . . . dark Turk.

Old Girgis said, "The senses of one like 'el-Cunningham' would be keen." He saw Sarie shake her head, and she was laughing a little. "Then, the *marakani*?"

"Yes," she admitted. "The American."

"They say that he comes from great cities where there are many odors to dull a man's nose, so this should have a little sharpness," he commented. "Perhaps I should use zibet instead of musk." He asked suddenly, "It is not a perfume to fill the room?"

"No, no, no!"

"But for when he stands close?" Old Girgis smiled up at her. "For the ear and the brow, and a touch outside the nostrils? Now I know."

"I want it soon." Sarie rose from the bench. "Payment shall be whatever you ask."

A movement from her guards drew her attention, and she saw them coming to their feet, looking along the street.

"There need be no payment. But, perhaps, a small gift." The old man straightened stiffly from his mats. "I feel the cold when the sun has gone, and my cloak is thin," he suggested.

"You shall have a warm one," Sarie promised him, and a Nubian called from the doorway.

She looked and saw the man moving aside. Prince Mikki suddenly appeared.

He smiled briefly, saluting as he said, "One of your fellows at the house said you were here."

"I'll not be a moment." She wondered what he wanted, and turned to the *attâr*. "When shall you be ready?"

"I will begin now. Perhaps I will come to you tomorrow."

She thanked him, and turned to the doorway.

The arrival of Mikki's car had drawn women to balconies and doorways; they stepped back when they saw Sarie, covering their faces to the eyes, calling shrilly to children playing in the roadway. Everywhere, natives scurried for shelter.

Mikki unfastened his cape, swinging it off his shoulders, and Sarie saw that his face was pale. "I wanted to talk to you." He smiled again, but his expression was strained. "Only not here!"

It was only a little distance to where Prince Mikki's car stood outside the courtyard of her house. She saw suitcases strapped to the luggage grid, and the headlamps had black metal masks for night driving.

"You're going away?" she asked.

"To Cairo first. Then Ankara."

He followed her into the courtyard, when the two watchmen had pulled open the heavy wooden door. She drew the red scarf from her hair, going toward cane chairs set under the young date palms. Lotus blooms stood open above the still water of the sunken pool, and papyrus grass grew stiffly from an earth bed under the palms, its tufts brightly green.

"Then you've come to say good-bye," Sarie said.

"And I shall not be coming back," he answered.

SHE sat down, watching him curiously as he stood there. The two watchmen sprawled themselves along a stone bench against the jutting wall which hid the street, and the Nubians from the shop squatted near them. All were staring toward Mikki, quick to sense a strangeness about him.

He said, suddenly, "Sarie, don't you think it's time you got away from here?"

"You mean, with you?" she asked coolly.

His eyes widened in surprise that she should have guessed so easily. He pitched his cape to the table, bending toward her.

"I've just seen Cunningham." He dropped onto the other chair, and looked at her for a long moment. "Can't you see why you're being held a prisoner here?"

"So that, if it becomes necessary, they can hand me over to Ibn Abdallah and keep him quiet?" she asked.

That surprised him, again. He had the Turk's view that women are chattels, and it had not occurred to him that she might have thought things out for herself.

"They'll have to give you up, or they'll have trouble everywhere," he told her quickly. "They know it, and that's why they keep you here!" Then he said, "They won't hesitate to do it, because individuals don't count in war."

He waited for her to respond. When she said nothing, he reached to touch her arm. "I want to get you out of this."

"Why?" Her tone was curious. "Why should you bother about me?"

"Have you forgotten what I once said to you?" His fingers pressed against her sleeve. "Strange things come out of great wars!"

She nodded, watching him, and she was very calm.

"And things are happening now." He lowered his tone, and his words came fast. "Ibn Abdallah is rousing the deserts, and a lot will come of that. Great things!" he exclaimed, then he whispered, "Sarie, I am a prince and you are a queen." He held her gaze while his hand quivered against her arm. "I have a destiny, and I know that yours is linked with it! That's why I want to get you away."

She knew that he was talking for some purpose of his own, and she could read falsity in the very words with which he tried to impress her. When she did not answer, his voice grew eager.

"I can get you away across the lake. I'll come back for you two or three nights from now. I'll take you somewhere that's safe, before they even know that you've

gone. Before those dervishes can come after you again!"

"And we'd go at night?" Her low tone matched his. "When there's no one to see, and no one will know where I've gone, or with whom?"

He nodded, fingers tightening, smiling. "I'll plan it out, Sarie."

She sat back, looking at him before she said quietly, "You must be quite desperate about something, if you think I'd put myself so much in your hands." She stood up and he stared, completely disconcerted, as she asked, "What's gone wrong, Mikki, that you should suddenly want to use me?"

That startled him. He jerked sharply to his feet and anger, only a little below the surface, widened his eyes and drew down the corners of his mouth. Over by the wall, the four guards came upright and two of them began to move forward, as though they thought that Sarie might need their protection.

She could see that Mikki had been working toward some purpose of his own and, because she now wanted only to be rid of him, she said deliberately, "I hope you have a safe journey to Ankara."

He shifted on his feet, seeking words, then snatched at his cape and faced her again. "Sarie, only one thing can happen if you stay," he began.

"Good-bye, Mikki," she answered.

The Nubians, moving in, caught his glance. He looked from them to Sarie and, suddenly, brought his heels together, lifting a hand to his cap. "I may come back," he said, then went away across the courtyard.

A man hurried to open the door for him. Sarie watched him go and she stood slender against the trimmed, dark trunks of the palms, black lashes narrowed and veiling her eyes.

She heard his car roar away, turning along the Shari Muhammed Ali, heading toward the canal road which ran south for Cairo.

THE watchman returned and sat down again. The sound of the car faded, leaving the air empty and silent, and the courtyard grew very still.

She turned to pick up her scarf, wondering what Mikki's motive had been. She had the impression that his approach had come from some impulse, arising out of sudden circumstances, rather than from some considered plan, as he had tried to suggest.

She was not disturbed, and she did not think much about it; except to decide that it would be wise to tell Cunningham of what had happened, in case it had some meaning for him.

She moved toward the lily pool, beckoning one of the Nubians. The man knew what she wanted. He pulled a knife from his belt, stooping when she pointed, cutting the stem of a white lotus bud.

It was a perfect thing, lovely in its symmetry, with soft petals tipped faintly red. It would open in the night beside her bed, and she would catch its perfume.

Every night, now, she slept only a little before she wakened and lay thinking of Larrimore, of what he had said while Ibn Abdallah's torches were burning in the market place, and of what she had concealed.

Thinking, too, that soon there must be an end to things between herself and the Yezidees and the prophet from Medina.

She slept badly because, now, she knew what the end would be, and just how it would come.

(To be concluded)

ONE MAN'S ROAD

A FACT STORY

By WILLIAM MORGAN HOBBS

COUNT PETER KLEINMICHEL glared at the long list of railroad supplies to be purchased. "Locomotive tenders, indeed!" he stormed. "Boats this American engineer now wishes me to buy for his railroad. Is he afraid, then, that his trains will fall off his bridges into the rivers?" He glared up at the trembling subordinate who had brought him the list. "I will stop this nonsense. Find me this Veestler at once."

He was still snorting when the culprit was ushered into his presence. The newcomer was a handsome, mild mannered man who, though in civilian clothes, had the build and bearing of a soldier. He was George Washington Whistler, railroad builder extraordinary, who had accepted the Tsar's invitation to come to Russia and build a great railroad line from St. Petersburg to Moscow.

His young son, Jimmie, who liked to draw, was later to become one of the world's great artists. And the wonderful road the engineer was planning was, a hundred years later, to be littered with dead as troops of a sovietized Russia and nazified Germany became locked in

ILLUSTRATED BY PETER KUHLHOFF

a struggle to the death for this valuable prize.

But Whistler could not foresee his son's fame or the slaughter his road was to cause. At the moment he was mentally preparing himself for another of Kleinmichel's stupid charges.

When the Russian official, his face a fierce challenge, showed him the item, Whistler suppressed a smile.

"Your Excellency does not understand," he explained, patiently, "that a locomotive tender is quite different from the seagoing variety. I must have some for the efficient operation of our locomotives."

He drew a picture of one and Kleinmichel grunted in apology.

WHISTLER was not perturbed by such suspicion. Ever since he had stepped off the boat he had been explaining this and explaining that to perplexed Russian officials who didn't understand what railroads were all about.

For at that time, barely a century ago, the railroad was still looked upon as an instrument of the devil. There was, in Russia, only a short road from St. Petersburg to the royal suburb of Tsarskoye Selo which, a few years before, a Czech engineer named Gerstner had persuaded the Tsar to let him build as an experiment. And, as the peasants watched the locomotive roar along, hauling the distinguished passengers who monopolized the line, they crossed themselves frequently. This "harnessed samovar," they whispered fearfully, was propelled by the devil himself who had been imprisoned in its mysterious bowels and forced to work. The flaming coals it belched from its huge chimney could be only hellfire.

The Tsar took little interest in this new method of transportation until he learned that in other European countries troops had been moved about very rapidly by rail. Anything that might benefit his unnecessarily large and cumbersome military machine made Nicholas sit up and take notice. It now became His Majesty's pleasure to be interested in railroads.

He sent scouts abroad with instructions to study foreign roads and find him the best engineer in the world. To the United States, where railroad building fever ran high in that year of 1841, came Colonels Melnikov and Kraft. On their tour of American railroads they met Whistler. Others had told them of his skill and now, as he showed them over his Western Railroad of Massachusetts, explaining points in construction, they knew they had found their man. Upon their return to St. Petersburg, they told the Tsar that, without doubt, the outstanding railroad builder of that time was "Major Veestler."

The Tsar wasted no time in sending for him.

It was a great honor to be asked by the Russian emperor to knit into being such a gigantic work, but Whistler was not impressed. He knew that he wouldn't like the pomp and ceremony of St. Petersburg and was reluctant to go so far away from his country and family. But the itch to create a great new railroad won.

Whistler's new assignment became the talk of the engineering world. Behind him, for the rest of his profession to shoot at, he had left an amazing record in railroad building. But, more important to him, he left a country he loved, a country in whose making he had occupied a front seat.

He had grown up in his birthplace of Fort Wayne, Indiana. West Point claimed him, appropriately enough since his father had been a soldier. For Captain John Whistler had fought with Washington and admired his former commanding officer so much that he named his own son after him. In 1800, when George Washington Whistler, the future engineer, came into the world, Fort Wayne was a rugged and dangerous outpost in the Northwest Territory. Settlers' blood had been copiously spilled by the Indians of the region. Captain John, one of the trail blazers, had trekked west with his little family to found a post on Lake Michigan which he called Fort Dearborn. Later settlers were to rename it Chicago.

Young George was an optimistic lad who liked music and when he reached West Point his proficiency with the flute

soon earned him the nickname of "Pipes." He was a brilliant student and returned, shortly after graduation, to teach. But the classroom was not for him. He preferred the field, and he was soon out surveying for the army.

Meanwhile, in England, a man named George Stephenson had been doing amazing things with an infant invention—the steam railroad. An epidemic of railroad building broke out all over England and soon spread across the ocean to that scrambling young republic which had so recently broken its bonds with the old world. In the 1820s, railroad projects in America were being financed throughout the East and since the army had most of the good engineers these new companies were borrowing them right and left from the government to supervise their railroad construction. Whistler was lent to a company planning a road to be called the Baltimore and Ohio. The directors sent him, with William McNeill and another engineer, to England to study British methods, and when they returned construction was started on the B & O.

Whistler speedily grasped the problems of this new science and, before long, his services were eagerly sought throughout the railroad building world. He helped in the creation of the Baltimore and Susquehanna, the Paterson and Hudson, the Providence and Stonington, and the Western Railroad of Massachusetts. Finally, in 1833, the army decided that it would no longer lend him to the private companies. He was faced with the unpleasant task of deciding between his commission and his railroad building career. He chose the latter.

He went to Lowell, Massachusetts, where he built locomotives and finally assumed the important post of chief engineer of the Western Railroad of Massachusetts at Springfield. And he was thus occupied when the Tsar's scouts arrived to look over his road.

THE Russians were greatly impressed by the problems he had solved in building extensions of the railroad, some of the track traversing very difficult terrain. His vision in overcoming hitherto untackled difficulties approached genius. And, as they had more and more talks with him, they were struck by his profound knowledge and understanding of railroading. They had covered the field—and here, they felt, was the greatest engineer of them all.

They hastened back to Russia and enthusiastically recommended him to the Tsar. The Russian emperor immediately requested his services. He offered Whistler the post of consulting engineer at $12,000 a year.

Rather reluctantly, Whistler accepted the Tsar's invitation. And, already homesick, though definitely looking forward to working on the greatest project of his career, he arrived, in the summer of 1842, in St. Petersburg.

He immediately set to work to study his task. By horse and on foot he thoroughly covered the terrain between the capital and Moscow. To many another man the outlook would have been disheartening. Huge swamps lay in the way, and giant forests. The air was unhealthy. Supplies would have to be hauled across vast wastes. The elements were seldom anything but brutal. Yet, across four hundred and twenty miles the American was expected to stretch a steel road cementing Russia's two greatest cities.

His survey completed, Whistler presented his plans to Count Kleinmichel for submission to the Tsar.

This Kleinmichel was a tyrant who was enjoying the Tsar's favor at the time, a great stropping man whose shrewd countenance accurately reflected his soul, or what passed for a soul. But for all his blackguardry, he was industrious and intelligent. The Tsar thought of him as a man who got things done—and the count certainly did. Some of the projects turned over to him were completed with amazing rapidity, but in receiving the Tsar's praises for this speed it is doubtful if he mentioned that a good percentage of his serf laborers died from an unhappy combination of overwork and beatings under the knout. Kleinmichel was fanatically interested in the new railroad and was as anxious as Whistler to get it started.

Whistler's preliminary report was ac-

cepted. But now the American ran into a controversy that was to become famous. The other engineers on the railroad were Russian and they decided that what they wanted was a six-foot gauge, Whistler having recommended a five-foot one—3½ inches wider than the standard European and American track. The Russians took the matter to Kleinmichel who lent an ear to their persuasion. Whereupon, Whistler sat down and wrote his "Report to His Excellency the Count Kleinmichel on the Gauge of Russian Railways," which has since become a classic in civil engineering circles.

The report was a model of conciseness. Its author took the opposing arguments one by one and broke them down in few words with amazing simplicity.

The Russians had claimed that a wider gauge would make possible the use of more powerful engines of greater speed. Whistler pointed out that the use of such locomotives—a great and needless expense—would not require an increased gauge but possibly a heavier rail; that such an exaggerated width would necessitate an increased length and thickness of axle, with its added weight, and that a wider roadbed to accommodate such tracks would result in a far greater cost in construction. The Russians argued that a six-foot gauge would create greater stability of rolling stock, more steadiness of motion and, consequently, more comfort to passengers. Whistler stated that this was so dependent upon the construction of carriages and the manner in which they were connected together in trains "that I cannot see what effect the gauge (with practical limits) can possibly have upon it—the experiments on this head have not shown any advantage of the wide over the ordinary gauge."

Whistler wrote this at a time when railroad building was in a purely experimental stage and conflicting theories on methods of construction were legion. But today, a hundred years later, this report could still stand up as an accurate analysis of railroad building procedure.

Kleinmichel had respect for few men but Whistler was one of them. He could see that this American knew his business. He read the report in silence, then called in the Russian engineers. In anything but honeyed words, he told them that in the future they would refrain from such disagreement and would abide by Whistler's decisions.

The report also explained why Whistler had added 3½ inches to the standard American and European gauge of 4 feet, 8½ inches. It would not be necessary to adhere strictly to the regular gauge for the purpose of connecting with other roads, he reminded Kleinmichel and the Tsar, because there were no other roads in Russia with which to connect (save the short line from St. Petersburg to Tsarskoye Selo). The small increase would be technically advantageous for the construction of engines while it was too small to materially affect the cost.

The greatest advantage he didn't mention in his report but, since he was a military man, there can be no doubt that he mentioned it to Kleinmichel and the Tsar, and it would have been a reason dear to the emperor's heart. He must have foreseen the day when Russian railways would snake out in all directions across the vast plains of the country, touching the borders of neighbor nations. Obviously, invasion by an enemy neighbor such as Germany or Austria-Hungary, where railroads followed the 4 foot 8½ inch pattern, would be greatly hampered by a difference in gauge, for not one foot of Russian track could be used for enemy rolling stock until it had been relaid to fit standard gauge equipment. The Russians found this a tremendous military asset in the First World War and in the Nazi drive of last year, and helped make possible that brilliant delaying action which resulted in the holding of Moscow and Leningrad until winter set in. Thus were unexpected dividends paid to Russia, a hundred years later, by the decision of this American engineer to add a few inches to the standard gauge.

His plans approved, Whistler set to work. The road was to follow the shortest possible route between the two cities, regardless of intervening towns. The Russians liked to relate that when the

engineers were discussing the route over a map Tsar Nicholas walked into the room, took a pencil, drew a straight line on the map between his capital and Moscow, and said: "That, gentlemen, will be the route of the new railroad." This may or may not have occurred but it certainly gibed with Whistler's instructions. Even the great city of Novgorod was snubbed. Through the tolerance of a slight deviation, it might have been on the road.

MONTH after month, Whistler wrestled with the problems of spanning the marshes, penetrating the forests. Thousands of serfs were mustered along the route and soon long stretches of roadbed had been completed and miles of track laid.

Whistler rode back and forth from sector to sector, supervising the work. He had the complete confidence of his men, engineers and serfs alike. But he detested the Russian system of serfdom, hated to see these slaves toiling for a pittance, much of which they had to turn over to their owners. Guards kept them at work with the knout. The grafting officials who received government contracts to furnish them with food supplied filthy grub and pocketed most of the money. If they tried to run away they were, almost without exception, recaptured and soundly beaten.

Scarcely an official connected with the road failed to receive his share of graft. The government paid dearly for its supplies and merchants reaped rich profits despite the necessity of giving a handout to every official involved in the securing of a contract. This was accepted Russian procedure. Kleinmichel, far from objecting to this practice, received a fabulous amount in graft himself. But he did draw the line at one point—no material used in the actual construction of the railroad could be of inferior quality. One nobleman, seeking to increase his already excessive profits, delivered faulty bolts which were promptly condemned by Whistler. When Kleinmichel heard about this he flew into one of his terrible rages and threatened to deal severely with anybody delivering inferior supplies in the future. He knew that Whistler would stand for no such nonsense and might, if further provoked, carry his troubles to the Tsar himself. Then the count would have some tall explaining to do, and his own ill-gotten gains might be bared.

This sordid angle of his project Whistler tried to ignore. Currying favor with superiors and attracting graft seemed to be the main concerns of all the men around him. And in this atmosphere, where each petty or high official watched his coworkers with the greatest jealousy or suspicion, life was not too pleasant. But, after all, he was not in Russia to criticize, or attempt to remake, the Tsarist system. He was a foreigner, there to build a railroad. Steering clear of politics, he made it plain to all that he was concerned only with his work.

One slight unpleasantness was corrected, although it is probable that Whistler hardly noticed it. Many of the Russian officials with whom he worked were titled aristocrats who saw fit to snub him boorishly for his lack of rank. The Tsar, hearing of this, was furious, for his admiration of the American was unbounded. He resolved to settle the matter, and did so when he attended the opening of a new art gallery to which members of the court, and Whistler as well, had been invited. The moment the Tsar entered, he walked up to Whistler, took him by the arm and made the rounds of the gallery with him before saying a word to anyone else. The engineer received no more snubs.

His family soon joined him and remained until, during an epidemic, he packed Anna and the children off to London. Anna McNeill Whistler was the sister of his old friend William McNeill. The engineer had married her some time after the romance of his youth had ended in the death of his first wife, Mary Swift Whistler. Anna, whose portrait likeness the world was presently to know as "Whistler's Mother," was a dutiful wife, devoted to her family and deeply religious. She was strict with her brood, including her husband. While she was an admirable woman, it is not likely that she quite took the place of Whistler's first love. With Mary he had

strolled down Flirtation Walk at West Point, planning the future, and soon after graduation they had eloped. Her death had been a terrible shock to him. His marriage to Anna was the result of a sober realization that his three children needed a good mother. By the time the Russian adventure began, the family had assumed proportions, although death had taken Joe, the youngest son by Mary. Anna gave the engineer five sons, the first born being Jimmie. And in the colorful atmosphere that characterized the capital of the Tsars young James Abbot McNeill Whistler received much of his education in art.

CONSTRUCTION on the road was proceeding rapidly. Whistler now felt sure that he could have it finished before the end of 1849, and he looked forward, with the keenest pleasure, to taking his family back to America.

But the future had in store for him two great setbacks.

The first was the February revolution in Paris which toppled Louis Philippe from his precarious perch on the throne of France. Nicholas had always lived in terror of the spread of revolutionary doctrine in Europe, and whenever it showed signs of ascendancy in some country on the continent the Tsar's troops were at the service of the royal house of that land. The Russian emperor knew that revolution in France meant unrest in Germany and, though not daring to ask his troops to go all the way to France, he meant to keep Germany in order. He had already sent a sizable array of soldiery to help Austria suppress the revolt in Hungary. Now he planned to prevent the seething mobs of the German principalities from overthrowing their rulers. By the time Nicholas's troops were on the march, these neighboring states were boiling over with revolt.

All this would cost money, plenty of money. The Tsar chopped unmilitary expenses right and left and diverted this treasure to his adventure in Germany. The money appropriated for railroad construction was thrown into the kitty. Saving the German princes was far more important to a panicky Nicholas than completing the road. That would have to wait.

In the councils of St. Petersburg, the railroad was forgotten in the race to keep Western Europe royalist. Work proceeded slowly in driblets, until, when the second great setback arrived, it stopped altogether.

For in 1848, cholera swept the land.

At first, it didn't appear in the St. Petersburg-Moscow region. Bestowed upon European Russia as a black gift from Asia, it raced from city to city, taking a hideous toll. Finally, one summer's day, it appeared in the capital. Its victims increased almost by geometric progression until scores, and then hundreds, were cut down each day. Stalking through the city's streets to the gates, it hurried out along the railroad where the serfs, their resistance lowered by overwork and bad food, died like flies, bringing all work to a standstill. Whistler, exhausted by his effort to keep construction moving, was visited by this ugly scourge in his home, one day in the fall of that dread year. He fought valiantly against the disease. He had a

(Continued on page 121)

THE CAMP-FIRE

Where readers, writers and adventurers meet

TWO recruits to add to the ranks of our Writers' Brigade this month. E. Hoffmann Price, whose "Gold Standard" heads the current contents page, soldiered in the Philippines and knows the mountains and jungles MacArthur's men have hallowed with their blood. Price says—

When I landed in Luzon, twenty-five years ago, I had not the foggiest idea that I was gathering fuel for *Adventure's Camp-Fire*. Luzon was a good deal quieter in those days than it is today, but down in Mindanao, the Moros were still raising occasional hell, and the first bamboo-Spanish a John-recruit in 15th Cavalry learned, after mastering the unprintables, was *jurmentado* and *bagsak*. The crater of Mt. Bagsak, an extinct volcano, was the scene of a battle in which Moro outlaws, greatly outnumbered, fought to the last man, with that same fanatic valor that has already caused a lot of Japanese headaches. And since that battle, *bagsak* has come to mean, completely finished, dead broke: a handy word every soldier needs every one of the twenty-nine days following payday!

Then came some soldiering on the Mexican Border, and a year and a half with the A.E.F. That was in France, remember? This was polished off by four years at West Point and a commission in the Coast Artillery Corps. (Price is the only man we know who went to the Point after serving a hitch in the ranks. *Ed.)*

The eighteen years which followed my leaving the service have been quiet enough. Eight have been devoted to operating an acetylene plant, and the remainder to uncorking something like 400 yarns, many of which got into print. The nearest approach to adventure was driving to Mexico City upon hearing that the Pan American Highway had been completed. Reports on the completion had been slightly exaggerated, but I got there and back.

Today, well equipped with years and dependents, I'm inclined to dodge adventure rather than hunt it; but if the draft board figures it's up to me to win this war, well, it'll be just like old times again. And with much better travel prospects than we had in 1917. Now excuse me while I get another armload of wood for that fire—newcomers should be read and not heard!

Appended to the story as a footnote was the transcript of a UP dispatch, as follows—

MANILA, DEC. 29 (by United Press) A dispatch to the *Herald* said that German officers were reported to have been seen on the Northern Luzon front.

The *Herald* reported that Filipino soldiers who fought at Damortis said they mistook German officers for Americans during the fighting. They said the Germans, believed to be officers of Jap tank formations, advanced ahead of Japanese troops and represented themselves as Americans.

They told the Filipino soldiers to go ahead, as the way was clear. Before they knew it, they were being fired upon by the Japanese.

We never saw any confirmation of the item, and if there was any official dis-

avowal of it we missed that, too. Anyone spot a follow-up?

WILLIAM MORGAN HOBBS, who gives us the timely historical article on the American responsible for Russia's vital railroad, was for five years a member of New York's famous Seventh Regiment (now 207th Coast Artillery anti-aircraft) where he attended Officer's School (Candidates' School) and graduated with a commission. Was one of a group representing, and seeking recognition from our State Department for, the Ramon Grau San Martin government in Cuba eight years ago. He has written fiction and articles for several national magazines and for American and foreign newspapers. Is a student of things military and has written articles for military journals on obscure American historical figures. Is Secretary, Treasurer and a director of the Iron and Steel Board of Trade, a large mercantile credit agency in New York.

MAJOR FRANK W. EBEY (He was Captain Ebey when "Organization Day" arrived by Clipper from Hawaii. *Ed.)* has a new address now, one of those ambiguous APO #—— c/o POSTMASTER—— superscriptions that appear so often these days on the mail of soldiers on active duty. We wrote him to ask if there was any personal footnote he cared to add to the story for publication in *Camp-Fire* for we knew there had to be a story behind the tale. He answered—

> It is against War Department orders to have the name of my old post mentioned, but I believe it is all right to say that on December 7, 1941, I was strolling up and down the officers' line at a certain post on Pearl Harbor. I was waiting for the paper boy, impatient with him and more impatient because my sailing for the States had been postponed from Dec. 6 to Dec. 8. About that time I saw the dive bombers hit Pearl, and the bombs fall on Hickam and got strafed myself. In other words, I saw the war start. I was in command of Battery "B" 55th C.A. on that day. The battery was commended along with the battery commander for being the first known U. S. Army unit to open fire as a unit. We had three machine guns mounted and chattering at 81, six minutes after the first bomb fell. At 813, Sergeant Casimir Jankauskas and Corporals Charles A. Keith and Robert B. Dillard, operating the guns, caught two low flying fighters within the space of half a minute and brought them down. As far as can be determined, these were the first enemy casualties inflicted by units of the United States Army. Later, we crossed Pearl with our guns on a barge and got a real taste of first hand strafing that made the stuff we caught at our gun park look like confetti throwing. I am a Major, U. S. Army now, and am stationed somewhere else. Battery "B" is the outfit I had in mind with the story, "Organization Day." No doubt as surprised as any military and naval forces in history have ever been surprised, these young Americans were magnificent in their calmness, coolness, and courage. I believe that the men of the fleet, and the men at Hickam and Wheeler Fields, showed their courage to a greater degree because they caught a more tremendous attack. But, after talking about the attack with hundreds of officers and enlisted men of the Army, Navy and Marine Corps, I have heard of no cases of panic. I believe that all ranks in all branches met this attack like typical Americans will always meet danger; with plenty of good old American GUTS.

On December 26, 1941, Captain Ebey was ordered before the Roberts Board investigating the attack at Oahu as "an officer who particularly distinguished himself during the attack on Oahu, 7 December 1941."

WHEN "Nightly to Milwaukee" came to our desk its title was "Nightly to Milwa*l*kee" and all through the story the author was so consistent in his misspelling that we began to wonder if possibly we had been incorrect all these years putting a *u* instead of an *l* in there between the *a* and *k*. After all, we said to ourselves, Oliver lives out in that neck of the woods and ought to know what he's talking about. Then we verified—on a map and a handy beer bottle—and a shipment of proof from our printer, that's where our magazine goes to press, you know—and discovered we were right after all. We dropped Oliver a note, kidding him and asking how come. He explains, after a fashion—

That's funny about the way I spelled Milwaukee. Here in Chicago, we pronounce it with a Belmont Avenue accent, and I never noticed that it wasn't spelled that way. When in Milwaukee I probably was always so full of what made the town famous that I wouldn't have noticed.

Personally, we always want to spell the author's home town Chikago, and hereby give any Milwaukeeans similarly inclined permission to do likewise!

WELL, the Hawkins-Hauken rifle controversy generated by L. L. Foreman's story "Hell and Hawkins" in the May issue seems to have simmered down a bit and come to no definite conclusions, except that there's probably much to be said on both sides. You'll recall Teejay's letter that started the sparks flying from the July *Camp-Fire*. He said he'd never heard of a Hawkins rifle—that it should have been Hauken—and gave us a mighty interesting history of the Hauken brothers, early gunsmiths, to back up his assertion. We asked the author of the story to comment and here's the letter he shot back at Teejay—

Dear Teejay:

I was very greatly interested in your letter concerning the name of the rifle which I used in my story.

I bow to your first-hand knowledge. Nevertheless, it would seem that our gunsmith either had his name corrupted by the mountain men of the time, or that his historians are in error. For instance, Stanley Vestal, in his "Old Santa Fe Trail," speaks of the *Hawkins* rifle several times, and mentions the *Hawkins* gun store in St. Louis. And Ruxton, in his "Life in the Far West," describes the Hawkins rifle as: "A piece of very heavy metal, carrying 32 balls to the pound, stocked to the muzzle and mounted with brass; its only ornament being a buffalo bull, looking exceedingly ferocious, which was not very artistically engraved upon the trap in the stock." This describes our rifle, all right.

Actually, of course, "Kentucky Rifle" is a misnomer. It was a Pennsylvania product, which the Kentucky men made famous. It was developed by Swiss and German gunsmiths of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, about 1725, and survived for about a hundred years without any great changes, until the percussion rifles and breech-loaders came into use. Trying to trace all the different makers of that gun is a headache, for, as the gun grew in American popularity, it appears that hundreds of gunsmiths adopted its manufacture—few of them ever turning out any two exactly alike. Also, as you very truly point out, many of the guns were assembly jobs—various parts made by various craftsmen, and assembled in the workshops of such men as Hauken or Hawkins.

By the way, you mention Kit Carson as having been "heavy and dark" when you saw him. No doubt you know that this description varies from popular conception. Here, in his country, he is represented as having been slight and fair. This is the kind of thing that hustles writers into early graves!

My best respects and good wishes to you, sir, and I'm glad you liked the story despite the spelling of that gun's maker's name—whatever it was.

And here's Teejay's answer—

Dear L.L.:

Your kind and courteous note duly appreciated. It is one of those rare cases in which both of us are right—both rare and well done, you see.

Names are easily corrupted, and Hauken, Hawker, Hocker, Hawkins, Hoquer, and a dozen others were all named after the keepers of the hawks in old times, like Falconer, Faulkner, Farquar and so on. It is hardly worth any talk at all.

As to Kit Carson, now I was nine or ten when I saw him, and naturally he looked big to me. He was then clean shaven, and wore a big black hat like the Stetson. Being a mere child of 86, perhaps some real old fellow has a better memory than I, and I won't contradict him. Your authority's description of the rifle agrees with my recollection.

Jacob Hauken invented the vertical drills with steady rests for barrels. It bored a little more than halfway, then the barrel was reversed and the full length of the drill passed through, but the rifler was horizontal, as it was full caliber and had only one tooth.

I was a crack rifle-shot when I had good sights. Good luck. Write some more. Teejay.

And finally this, from a reader who certainly ought to be given the floor for a minute, if for no other reason than

(Continued on page 127)

(Continued from page 117)

railroad to finish and he wanted to be up and about, thinking of new ways to get the work started again. The Tsar was greatly concerned and kept himself continually informed as to Whistler's condition. And, after months of very game fighting, he did actually throw off the cholera. But its ravages were to prove fatal.

In April of 1849 he lost the battle after waging, what he might have termed at West Point, a faultless delaying action.

The Tsar, greatly distressed by his death, paid him one last compliment. He told Anna that he would like her sons to become page boys at his court. But she remembered that Whistler had refused to wear a Russian army uniform when requested to do so by the Tsar—who later, far from being affronted, gave the engineer the Cross of St. Anne. And Anna knew how her husband would have felt about his sons entering the Tsar's service. This sort of thing, Whistler had always believed, was not for Americans. She declined.

The road was almost finished. Great stretches of it were already in operation. From the shops Whistler had fitted out at Alexandroffsky, scores of locomotives and hundreds of cars had emerged, ready for their maiden run. And now, Kleinmichel sent to America for another engineer, Major Thompson Brown, who completed the road.

One day, in the fall of 1851, Tsar Nicholas inspected his newly completed toy. He was like a child, darting about in the train, examining its gadgets, inspecting the locomotive, asking questions. Excited and pleased, he heaped praise on the engineers and officials riding with him. But he knew full well that the one man who most deserved his thanks, the man who couldn't be thanked, was the one whose ingenuity had created this marvel of engineering and who had sacrificed his life in its building—George Washington Whistler.

TODAY, more than ever, Russia owes a debt of thanks to "Major Veestler." For this important artery has long played a major role in the economic life of the two great cities it connects, a fact fully realized when, last year, Nazi troops swarmed across it, from a point twenty-odd miles from Moscow to the outskirts of Leningrad, the Tsar's old capital, depriving Russia of its use. During the winter months, the Russians pushed the invaders back across these vital tracks, slowly, methodically, clearing mile after mile. Not until April, this year, was the Soviet government able to announce, with extreme satisfaction, that the first train, laden with food, had arrived at beleaguered Leningrad.

The Russians had won the second round of the continuous battle for control of "Major Veestler's" road.

Says Everybody is HYPNOTIZED

A strange method of mind and body control, that leads to immense powers never before experienced, is announced by Edwin J. Dingle, well-known explorer and geographer. It is said to bring about almost unbelievable improvement in power of mind. Many report relief of long standing illness. Others acquire superb bodily strength and vitality, secure better positions, turn failure into success. Often with surprising speed, talents, ability and a more magnetic personality are developed.

The method was found in remote and mysterious Tibet, formerly a forbidden country, rarely visited by outsiders, and often called the land of miracles in the astounding books written about it. Here, behind the highest mountains in the world, Mr. Dingle learned the extraordinary system he is now disclosing to the Western world.

He maintains that all of us are giants in strength and mind-power, capable of surprising feats, from the delay of old age to the prolonging of youth, from conquest of sickness to the achievement of dazzling business and professional success. From childhood, however, we are hypnotized, our powers put to sleep by the suggestions of associates, by what we read, and by various experiences. To realize their really marvelous powers, men and women must escape from this hypnotism. The method found by Mr. Dingle in Tibet is said to be remarkably instrumental in freeing the mind of the hypnotizing ideas that paralyze the giant powers within us.

A nine-thousand word treatise, revealing the startling results of this system, is now being offered free to anyone who quickly sends his name and address. Write promptly to the address below, as only a limited number of the free treatises have been printed.

The Institute of Mentalphysics, Dept. A76, 213 South Hobart Boulevard, Los Angeles, California

(Continued from page 8)

which was the landing place of the Spanish Explorer, Menendez, in 1565. His Castilian soldiers were accompanied by a following of the Franciscan Fathers, whose devotion and endurance were to be tested in the years before them. The distance covered by these Spaniards, as checked in our modern days was about 2714 miles which can be traveled now in a week's time but took them years to cover.

The Trail went to Jacksonville, Tallahassee, Pensacola, Mobile, Biloxi, New Orleans, Houma, Lafayette, Orange, Lake Charles, Beaumont, Houston, San Antonio, Ft. Stockton, El Paso, Mesilla Park, Douglas, Phoenix, Gila Bend, Yuma, El Centro, and San Diego. These are a few of the towns and cities that have been built on the route.

The South Texas cattle surplus increased and by the time Texas won her Independence in 1836 the Opelousas Trail had come into existence, paralleling the coast and leading from the Texas cattle region to settlements in Louisiana. Usually the drive was from Texas to Opelousas, Alexandria, or Natchitoches on the Red River, then down the river to New Orleans. The South Texas ranges were stocked with Spanish breeds of cattle while the northern and central parts of the state were being stocked with British breeds introduced by settlers from the U. S.

The Contraband and the Opelousas cattle trails no doubt are the oldest ones from Texas. I have saved clippings from newspapers for many years about the trails and other such information that came to my attention, but I have not seen a book on the subject—there may be such a publication. During Lafitte's rule on Galveston Island the three Bowie brothers were said to have made $65,000 in the slave trade. James Bowie, a native of Georgia, spent his early life in Louisiana. Rezin Bowie invented the knife that bears his name, and presented the first one he made to James for use in the chase. They were great hunters.

I would suggest that you write to R. F. Jennings, Sec'y Old Time Trail Driver's Association, Van Horn, Texas and ask him about the old songs that were sung on the Trails.

(Or to our *Ask Adventure* expert on old songs. See list of experts.—*Ed.*)

THE teen age of airpower.

Request:—Could you tell me what was the highest speed of any plane in the USA when the armistice was signed in 1918? Also more or less highest speed of latest plane in Europe at that time?

Yours very truly,

—L. A. Summerhayes,
San Jose de
Guatemala,
Guatemala, C. A.

Reply by Major Falk Harmel:—Sorry that figures aren't available to answer you exactly. However—

I find that on January 24, 1919, an Italian biplane, the Marchetti Vickers Terni, equipped with 200 h.p. Spa motor, and piloted by Sgt. Elia Lint, attained under official tests and over a closed circuit an average speed of 160 miles per hour.

On February 21, 1919, a Thomas-Morse Scout. equipped with 300 h.p. Hispano-Suiza motor, attained a speed of 164 miles an hour at Ithaca, N. Y. This record was witnessed and officially recognized.

On October 18, 1919, Capt. Gathergood flew an Airco DH4 machine with a Napier engine from London to Paris, a distance of 250 miles, in 80 minutes.

Figures given out by the U.S. Army Corps on the development of aircraft speed from 1909 to 1936, inclusive, insofar as pertains to military planes, disclose the highest speed for 1918 as 136 miles per hour, credited to a LePere (C-11) airplane.

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Notice: Many of our *Ask Adventure* experts are now engaged in government service of one kind or another. Some are on active duty in the Army or Navy, others serving in an executive or advisory capacity on various of the boards and offices which have been set up to hasten the nation's war effort. Almost without exception these men have consented to remain on our staff, carry on their work for the magazine if humanly possible, but with the understanding that for the duration such work is of secondary importance to their official duties. This is as it should be, so when you don't receive answers to queries as promptly as you have in the past please be patient. And remember that foreign mails are slow and uncertain these days, many curtailed drastically. Bear with us and we'll continue to try to serve you as speedily as possible.

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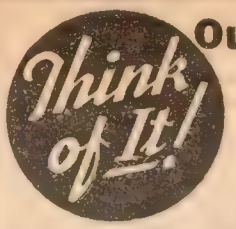

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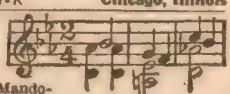

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Aviation: *airplanes, airships, airways and landing fields, contests, aero clubs, insurance, laws, licenses, operating data, schools, foreign activities, publications, parachutes, gliders* — MAJOR FALK HARMEL, 709 Longfellow St., Washington, D. C.

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Entomology: *insects and spiders; venomous and disease-carrying insects*—DR. S. W. FROST, 465 E. Foster Ave., State College, Pa.

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★**New Guinea**—L. P. B. ARMIT, care of *Adventure.*

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★**Australia and Tasmania**—ALAN FOLEY, 18a Sandridge St., Bondi, Sydney, Australia.

★**South Sea Islands**—WILLIAM MCCREADIE, "Ingle Nook," 89 Cornelia St., Wiley Park, N. S. W.

Hawaii—JOHN SNELL, Deputy Administrator, Defense Savings Staff, 1055 Bishop St., Honolulu, Hawaii.

Madagascar—RALPH LINTON, Dept. of Anthropology, Columbia University, New York City.

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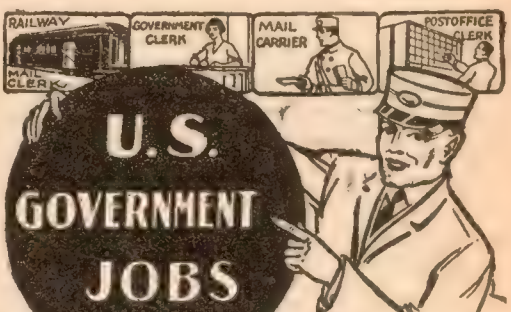

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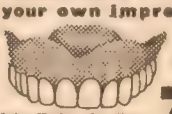

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(Continued from page 120)

his name—you guessed it—Hawkins!

Gentlemen:

About the argument over the Hawkins rifle:

Sir Richard Burton, the traveler (same man who translated the Arabian Nights), in some advice written in 1860 to those crossing the plains, mentioned two makes of rifle—the light Maynard carbine and the heavy *Hawkins* rifle. He says it was made in Denver.

On a guess, there probably were several different gunsmiths of the name, but they may have been related in spite of the variant spellings, as they were probably not much on book-learning, and as there is a branch of the Hawkins family today including several engineers and inventors which traces a strong mechanical bent back several generations.

Sincerely yours,
H. H. Hawkins

Now if we can just hear from a Hauken or two—

WE'RE mighty sorry it's been impossible to fill all the requests, many from men in the armed services, for reproductions of our May cover—the Marine wiping his bayonet on the rag of the rising sun. The original canvas has been presented to the Division of Public Relations at Marine Corps Headquarters in Washington and General Denig, the Director of the Division, assures us the leathernecks have good use for it. Whether you'll see it cropping up soon as a recruiting poster or what we don't know. Anyhow, we just haven't copies for distribution. Wish we did have—to hang in every barrack and post from Alaska to Darwin and back!—K.SW.

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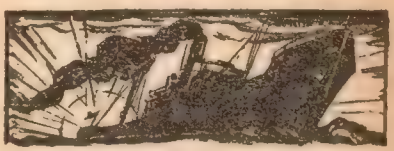

Blood began to pour from Ramos' lacerated wrists and slowly the muzzle of the great rifle swung away from the control tower of the locks.

"They'll give you a medal for what you've done, buddy," the guard said. "And you did it for the Americans, didn't you?"

"Sure," he said, smiling through the pain. "I found somebody I hate worse. I guess I don't hate them any more at all. I'll fight for the Americans any time."

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LOST TRAILS

NOTE: We offer this department to readers who wish to get in touch again with friends or acquaintances separated by years or chance. Give your own name and full address. Please notify *Adventure* immediately should you establish contact with the person you are seeking. Space permitting, each inquiry addressed to *Lost Trails* will be run in three consecutive issues. Requests by and for women are declined, as not considered effective in a magazine published for men. *Adventure* also will decline any notice that may not seem a sincere effort to recover an old friendship, or for any other reason in the judgment of the editorial staff. No charge is made for publication of notices.

Would like to get in touch with Dave Kelly Roberts. He was with the New Orleans *Daily States* in 1916-17. I think he went to Jacksonville, Fla. Write Harry Williams, 2029 Main St., Kansas City, Mo.

I would like to get in touch with Buck Rumkin, a young man in his twenties, last heard of in San Francisco, Calif., over two years ago. If this man, or anyone who knows of his whereabouts would write to his old friend on the MJ Ranch, it would be greatly appreciated. Bill Jewell, Foreman MJ Ranch, Buffalo Creek, British Columbia, Can.

Want to contact Monte Angus, a former Terry, Montana, agate-cutter. Believed to be near Albuquerque, N. M. Write J. McGee, General Delivery, Williston, No. Dak.

Would like to locate my father, George M. Calhoun, whom I have not heard from in many years. Last heard from, he was residing in Wichita, Kans., where he had spent many years. Any information as to his whereabouts will be appreciated by his son, C. E. Calhoun, 304-25th St., Galveston, Tex.

William Foster Elliot, George Herzog, Justin Knox Miller and William R. Kaake, friends of my long past youth, please let me hear from you. Walt Woestman, 2310 Midlothian Drive, Altadena, California.

Would like to hear from members of the Northern Pacific Ry. civil engineer group with whom I served at Trout Creek, Montana, under A. C. Terril, during year 1908. Among them, Leigh Adkins, Henry Aldrich, Carl Bohland. Communicate with D. C. Corle, 600 Ninth Ave., Mount Dora, Fla.

Would like to hear from Eddie Conlon, who was in the infantry in Panama in 1939 and came back early in 1940. L. E. Hilliard, 45 Summer St., Manchester, Mass.

Edward R. Wilson, about 60, civil engineer, mining expert, ex-Ordnance officer. Last heard of, Prineville, Ore., spring of 1940. Word will be appreciated by Jack Horsfoll, Rock Creek Blvd., Nashville, Ore.

Would like information concerning Peter John Fifer who resided last Jan. 1941 at 13 Spring Street, Boston, Mass. I have some souvenirs of his that he left in my care six years ago and would be glad to return them to him. M. Dolliman, 1459 W. 101 St., Los Angeles, Cal.

Would like to contact my cousin, Edwin F. Rowe, last heard of in Canton, Ohio, in 1912. At that time weighed 250 lbs., was working in a furnishing store as salesman; would be about 68 years old if living, probably in Ohio. C. Earl Drumm, County Home, Ebensburg, Pa.

Would like to get in touch with Preston Hurd who was formerly stationed at Albrook Field in the Canal Zone. Robert Owen, 103 Shultas Place, Hartford, Conn.

Would like to contact Hez or Robert Montgomery. Their mother, Mattie, in 1926 operated the Ivy Hotel, 30 North Fair Oaks Ave., Pasadena. Also, Chum McComb who in 1917 was employed by A. B. Perkins & Co., wholesale produce, 3d & Water Sts., Bay City, Mich. Frank G. Batchelor, Room 312, 115 East 3rd St., Los Angeles, Cal.

Veteran William Daniel disappeared May, 1921, from the home of his parents, 4501-4th Ave., Brooklyn, N. Y. Served as corporal, Battery D, 62nd Field Artillery; was honorably discharged Dec. 31, 1918, a private, 314 Cavalry, Camp Owen, Texas. Last seen in Los Angeles, 1921. Was a licensed radio operator, had been a jockey, and had made several trips to Central and South America, as a seaman. Anyone knowing his whereabouts, please communicate with Veterans Administration, Washington, D. C., giving reference number XC-2,985,049.

82nd Division Veterans contact your Association at 28 East 39 Street, New York City. Elwood C. Ellinger, Secretary.

Would like to establish contact with Harold "Rube" Gordon with whom I was in recruit camp at Langley Field, Va., in November, 1939. Write P.F.C. William M. Bell, Jr., c/o *Adventure*.

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